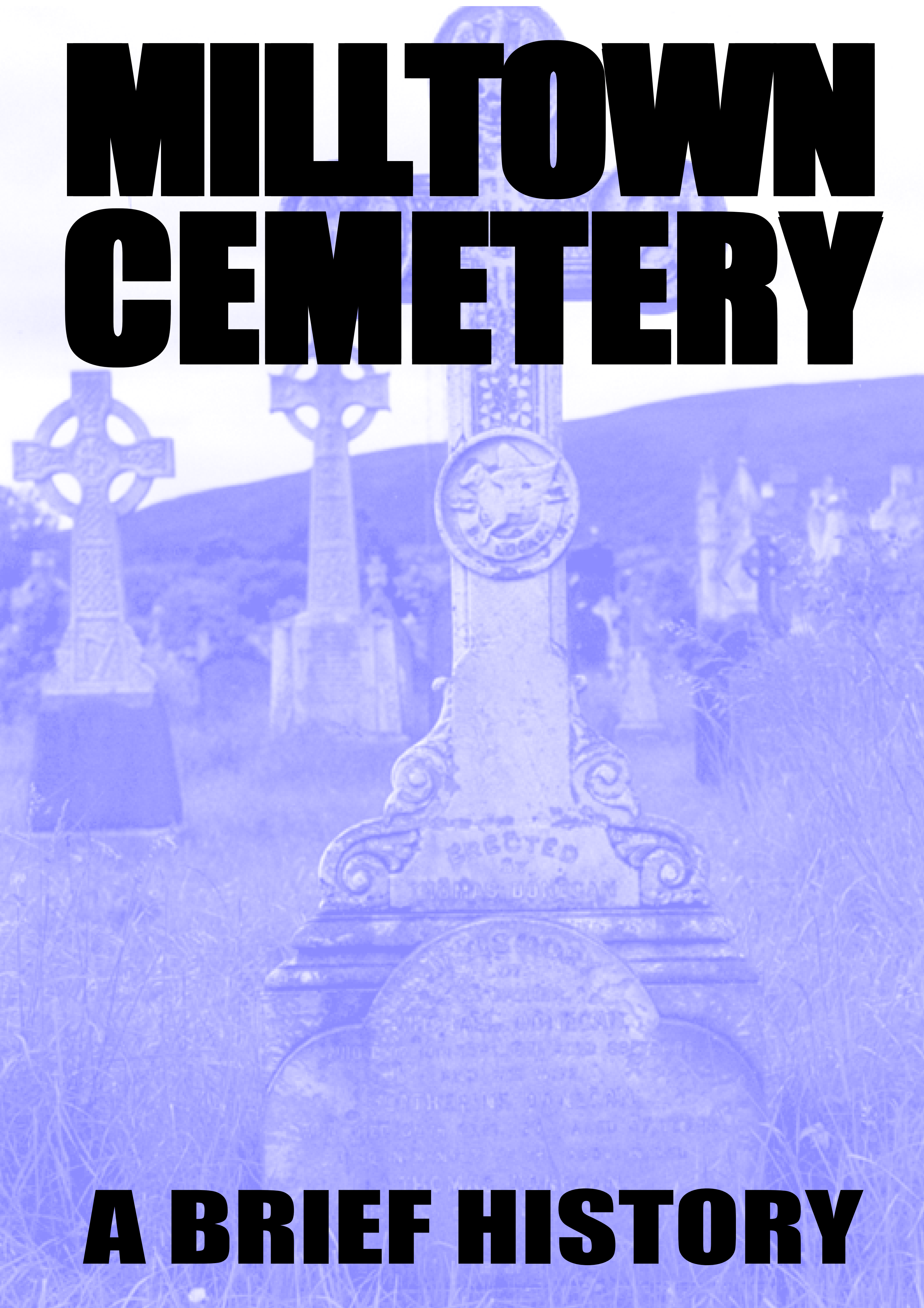
MILLTOWN CEMETERY



A BRIEF HISTORY

Milltown Cemetery, an established landmark of Nationalist Belfast, is often identified outside the realms of normal everyday burials, with the conflict of the past thirty years. Being the main Catholic burying ground for the city it is intertwined into the legacy of conflict.

The Republican plot, the funeral of Bobby Sands and those that subsequently followed in 1981 and more recently the huge 60,000 turnout for the Tom Williams commemoration are only three examples as to why this cemetery is now on the tourist guide for visiting.

However, there is more to Milltown than most would imagine, even those who visit it on a weekly basis. It captures a wide diversity of history that makes the importance of the cemetery stretch beyond Belfast conflict. There is the graves of Polish airmen whose story stretches from Warsaw to Britain, then to Kerry and finally Milltown. Other airmen from Britain and its Commonwealth are buried there, casualties of wartime air crashes. The victims of the 1941 Belfast Blitz lie in a mass grave, and scattered throughout the cemetery are headstones of service-men from both World Wars.

Also buried within the cemetery are men who served in both Irish and British Parliaments, along with others who crossed the social spectrum such as Timothy McCarthy who was considered to be one of the most brilliant journalists of his time. His death through illness in 1928 brought to a close the career of a man who was described by T.P. O'Connor, Father of the British House of Commons, as 'The greatest political and most versatile journalist in the country.'

Also to be found in the cemetery are the graves of figures such as Joseph Devlin (1871-1934) Northern Home Rule leader and Nationalist M.P. to Westminster and the Belfast publician Owen McMahon who was brutally slaughtered with his family in March 1922. One of the members of the gang who committed these dreadful deeds even lies buried just a few yards away.

There is without doubt a need to bring this history of this cemetery which has served Belfast since its opening on Sunday 19th September 1870 to a people who can identify with it so strongly, but are probably unaware of its wealth of history.

THIS SMALL BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE 85,000+ PEOPLE WHO LIE BURIED IN THE POOR GRAVES OF MILLTOWN

THEY ALL HAD NAMES

MILLTOWN CEMETERY

A BRIEF HISTORY

Raymond J Quinn
Joe Baker

GLENRAVEL PUBLICATIONS

REPUBLICANISM AND MILLTOWN

There is no doubt that Milltown Cemetery is a famous landmark the world over due to the Republican graves contained within it. Many of the burials which have taken place in this ground have been screened worldwide with the most notable being that of Bobby Sands, the 1981 hunger striker who died in the H. Blocks. Another single incident which helped make it a famous also occurred at one of the Republican Plots when a lone Loyalist attacked the funerals of three IRA members who were shot dead by the SAS. Images from Milltown were shown around the world when an almost suicidal attack was carried out by Michael Stone against a crowd numbering many thousands. Three people died in this attack with Stone being captured by the crowd and then rescued by the RUC and arrested. For some people this is the only history they know and therefore it is here that our history of Milltown begins.

In the year 1867, Ulster's first Republican martyr of the Fenian period, William Harbinson, died whilst interned in Belfast Prison (Crumlin Road.) A former Colour Sergeant based at Victoria Barracks in the New Lodge area of Belfast he was one of many members of the Fenian Brotherhood who were sent into, and used within, the British Army for the purpose of recruiting for the movement.

With the knowledge of weapons and military protocol he possessed, Harbinson became training instructor to the various Fenian circles, instructing them in the use of arms and military tactics.

The hesitant tactics and refusal to give the word for action to thousands of men like Harbinson and his comrades was one of the mysteries connected with the leadership of the movement at that time, and left them open to harsh and prolonged criticism.

It is since recorded that a member of the movement (an Irish-American) is alleged to have passed on information to the British Government of the activities and personnel of the movement and, in a subsequent lightning round-up around Antrim and Down, Harbinson and many of his comrades were arrested and interned in Belfast Prison.

While interned there, William Harbinson died suddenly from a heart attack at the age of 44 on the 9th of September, 1867. He was buried in the ancient monastic grounds at Portmore, Ballinderry, Co. Antrim. Thus William Harbinson became Antrim's and Ulster's first martyr of the Fenian movement.

Forty five years later in 1912, a plot of ground was secured in Milltown Cemetery and a monument in the form of a Celtic Cross was erected not only to commemorate the sacrifice of William Harbinson, but also to act as a memorial to all who served with him in the ranks of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and to those who suffered with him in Belfast Prison. Included among the seventy two names inscribed on the monument are those of twenty Protestant Republicans who were members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and also the names of Colonel Kelleher, Captain John Dwan, Peter Healey, Captain T. H. O'Brien, Lieutenants Patrick Hassen and Mark O'Neill, officers in the United States Army and all of whom were in Belfast Prison with Harbinson. These Irish-Americans had been members of Clan na Gael who had come over from America to take part in the Fenian insurrection.

Those who are buried in the plot are:

SECTION COMMANDER SEAN McCARTNEY. 8th MAY 1921

From Norfolk Street he was killed on active service by British Troops on Lappinduff Mountain, Co. Cavan. A member of D.Coy, 1st Battalion I.R.A., a monument was erected to him on Lappinduff. At the time of his death he was part of a flying column of 12 volunteers made up from the 1st Battalion of the Belfast Brigade.

SEAN McCARTNEY

JOE McKELVEY

LT. GENERAL JOE McKELVEY 8th DECEMBER 1922

Executed by firing squad by Free State Troops in Mountjoy Jail in Dublin, alongside Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows and Richard Barrett. Their only guilt was that they opposed the Treaty. Joe McKelvey, although born in Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone, grew up in Cyprus Street, Belfast and was involved from an early age in the Republican movement, rising to command the 3rd Northern Division. A huge turnout lined the Falls Road for the funeral following Mass in St. Mary's Church, Chapel Lane.

VOL SEAN GAFFNEY 18th NOVEMBER 1940

He died during internment on the prison ship *Al-Rawdah.* Born in Co. Cavan, he came to Belfast to live and work in the early part of the century. A member of the Republican movement he was imprisoned during the 1920-23 conflict period. Prominent in G.A.A. activities in Belfast, he was again arrested in September 1939 and subsequently interred in Crumlin Road and Derry jails. He was transferred along with the other internees to the 'Al-Rawdah' in the autumn of 1940, and it was here that Séan died suddenly on the 18th of November, 1940.

His remains were followed by thousands as the funeral proceeded from St John's Church on the Falls Road to the Republican plot in Milltown. The then Bishop of Down and Connor, Rev. Dr. Mageean walked with the mourners behind the tricoloured covered coffin.

VOL TERRENCE PERRY 7th JULY 1942

From Ton Street, he died of illness in Parkhurst Prison, England, while imprisoned for possession of explosives. A member of D.Coy, 1st Belfast Battalion I.R.A., his remains were brought home to Belfast and interred in the Republican plot on July 13th, 1942.

STAFF CAPTAIN SEAMUS BURNS 12th FEBRUARY 1944

Died of gunshot wounds received in a shoot out with the RUC at the corner of Castle Street and Queen Street the previous day, 11th February 1944. Interned in September 1939 at the age of 18, he later took part in the big Derry jail escape of March 20th 1943. Rearrested by Free State Forces he spent a spell interned in the Curragh Camp, before returning to Belfast a wanted man living on the run in 'safe houses.'

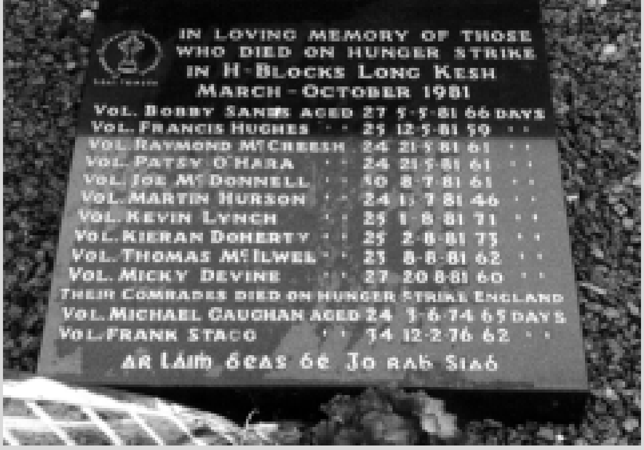
THE TOM WILLIAMS PLOT

THE 'TOM WILLIAMS PLOT.' TO THE RIGHT OF THE PICTURE IS THE 'OLD REPUBLICAN PLOT.'

Close beside the Republican Plot (which is now known as the 'Old Republican Plot') is the 'Tom Williams Plot.' A 17 foot square of ground which contains the County Antrim Memorial listing the names of all those I.R.A. volunteers from all over County Antrim. It became known as the 'Tom William's Plot' because it was bought from money accumulated by the Tom Williams Gaelic Athletic and Camogie Club, Belfast, which was originally founded in 'A' Wing of Belfast Prison in 1945 by the Republican sentenced prisoners and mainly because a grave had been reserved to reinter the remains of Tom Williams.

The County Memorial was designed by Séan MacGoill and is built in a cruciform shape rising from a black base in the form of a cross. Made from Irish limestone, it has inscribed on it a roll of honour, listing the names of Antrim's martyrs starting from the 1798 rising to the present day. The work of Dublin sculptor, Richard Enda King, is to be seen in the form of two bronze sculptors depicting the figure of Roisin Dubh exhorting the men of Antrim to rise and strike for their freedom. The second image on the reverse side shows again the figure of Rosin Dubh rising from bondage; a figure or resurrection leaving behind the bonds of oppression and slavery breaking the bars of imprisonment and rising to freedom. Practical consideration was given to design the monument in such a way that it gave a point of interest to the maximum number of people during a gathering or commemoration service and to allow for a number of burial places on either side of the main arm of the cross. Unfortunately the outbreak of conflict in 1969, just two years after the memorial was unveiled, ensured these burial places were occupied.

Some years later a plaque was added on the right arm of the cruciform in memory of Jimmy Steele and an adjoining railed plot has four tablets laid each listing the names of four I.R.A. members. Sixteen in all are buried here.



While many visitors to Milltown Cemetery wishing to see the Republican Plot are inclined to go to the new plot where the graves of those killed in the recent conflict are to be found, it should also be remembered others are buried in various sections of the cemetery embracing a wealth of history and conflict that stretches beyond the strife torn streets of Belfast. Celtic Crosses and headstones inscribed in Gaelic and adorned with the red hand of Ulster can be seen amid the endless lines of graves within the crowded statuettes and marble stones of Belfast's Catholic dead

MURTAGH McASTOCKER

The Twenties, Thirties and Forties saw Republicans give their lives to uphold a struggle both in defensive and offensive operations. Twenty one year old Murtagh McAstocker had died of gunshot wounds inflicted on Saturday 24th September, 1921 on the lower Newtownards Road. He was a volunteer in B.Company, 2nd Battalion based in the Short Strand/Ballymacarrett areas. His funeral took place to Milltown on Tuesday 27th September 1921, and was one of the largest funerals to come out of that district during those troubled years. I.R.A. volunteers of his own company and also of C.Company from the neighbouring Market area, marched behind the hearse as a vast throng of people not only from Short Strand but other Nationalist districts followed the funeral. The British military with armoured cars zig zagged to and fro through the ranks trying to break up the formation, but the men always reformed and kept marching on until the armoured cars desisted in their efforts. When passing through the centre of the city and before it reached the cemetery there were two battalions marching. At the graveside, buglers sounded the Last Post and three volleys were fired over the coffin. There is a memorial window in memory of Murtagh McAstocker in St Matthews church, Ballymacarrett, the only memorial window to be found in a Catholic church in Belfast for an I.R.A. member.

Another Ballymacarrett man is to be found buried with a 'red hand grave', Sean Martin of Anderson Street, Short Strand. He was killed in April 1940 during a lecture on arms and a Millis hand grenade in a small terrace house in Anderson Street.

In the course of the lecture Sean, who was giving the instruction, had dismantled the grenade, and was putting it together again. The detonator which he was using was thought to have been a dud one. In demonstrating how to throw the grenade, he pulled out the pin and released the lever. Hearing the hissing sound of the fuse he realised that the detonator was live and that the grenade was about to explode. He rushed to the window with the intention of throwing it out on to the street, but some children were playing outside. In the few seconds left to him, Sean had to make that terrible choice; shouting to the others to get out of the house - he pulled the grenade into himself with his two hands and leaned over the kitchen table with the grenade covered by his whole body. The device exploded and blew him right across the kitchen, killing him instantly. All the others escaped uninjured.

In Milltown he rests with a Celtic Cross adorned with a red hand. The epitaph in Gaelic reads:- "Gradh nios fearr nirabh agduine na a bheo a thabhairt" which translated means:- "Greater love than this hath no man, than that he lay down his life for his friends..."

FIRING PARTY AT THE FUNERAL OF MURTAGH McASTOCKER

ONE OF THE MANY 'RED HAND' GRAVES TO BE FOUND IN MILLTOWN

Close by to the grave of Sean Martin is a large Celtic Cross which as with other Celtic headstones was erected by the National Graves Association, this one being being to the memory of Ardoyne man Sean MacCaughey.. His death came as a result of a hunger and thirst strike in Portlaoise Prison on the 11th of May 1946. Sean had already spent five years 'on the blanket' having had a death sentence commuted to one of penal servitude for life by a Free State military court following a country wide protest against what was considered a harsh sentence for a trivial offence.
Thousands of people lined the route as his remains were first brought to Dublin, and then to Belfast for the funeral mass in Holy Cross Church, Ardoyne on Monday 13th May, 1946. Thousands lined the route that morning as the cortege travelled from Ardoyne to Milltown for burial. Sean was a keen GaelGeoir, and the inscription on his monument is in Irish. A plaque placed on the grave by his old comrades of the Northern Command in 1963 reads:-

In proud and loving memory of
Lt. Gen. Sean MacCaughey,
Chief of Staff I.R.A. 1941
who died for Ireland in Portlaoise Prison
11th May 1946
after a hunger and thirst strike which lasted 23 days

Splendid and Holy causes are served by men who are themselves Splendid and Holy

Erected by his comrades
Belfast Battalion
Northern Command I.R.A.

There are many other Republicans buried throughout the cemetery, well known names in the annals of Republican history who, after a lifetime of struggle, died of old age. Men such as Jimmy Steele, Albert Price, Jo McGurk, Hugh McAteer, Liam Burke, Paddy Nash, Jim Johnstone, Billy Murray, Patsy Hicks, Anthony Lavery, the Matthews brothers, John O'Rawe, Frank Duffy, and many more men and women who dedicated themselves to the cause of Irish freedom.

TOM WILLIAMS

Much has been written and spoken of Tom Williams the young Clonard man executed in Belfast Prison on the 2nd September 1942. His name, and the fight to have his remains removed from the prison burial ground to a reserved grave in the Republican Plot was kept alive over the years by the National Graves Association. This campaign reached its 58 year end when in January 2000, the remains were finally laid to rest in consecrated ground in the family grave.
The National Graves Association, although keen to have the remains laid in the Republican Plot were happy to compromise with relatives, as Tom was laid with beside his mother.

An account given to the authors by a veteran North Belfast Republican, Billy Wiggins, who was imprisoned in Belfast Prison at the time of the execution sums up the atmosphere and feeling at the time.
This account has been published here for the first time:-

The days and nights proceeding Tom Williams death on the scaffold have been inbedded in my memory down through the years since. I vividly remember those days of tension, feelings of emotion, bitterness and resentment that prevailed among the three hundred or thereabouts internees in D.Wing of the prison at the time.
Following the reprievals of his five companions hopes were raised that Tom's life might still be spared. But despite appeals from the Cardinal, Politicians North and South, all was in vain.
Naturally all forms of recreation (football, handball etc) were cancelled. The men were in no mood for anything but walking around in silence either in the excerise yard or in the mess hall. This was the old prison workshop. It was used as a kitchen, recreation room and chapel by the internees. It was decided to fast on the eve of the execution, until the special Mass the following morning at approximately the hours of Tom's death. That was a particularly sad and painful day, and the night was also unforgettable. Being in cells in D.Wing meant that we were on the Crumlin Road side of the prison as indeed is A.Wing also. We listened as all through the night groups of women were outside the gates, one group singing hymns and reciting rosary after rosary. However another group had gathered further down the road at Bedeque Street to engage in 'booing', jeering and to sing Orange songs.
The Mass was to be celebrated by Fr. Oliver of Ardoyne who with another Ardoyne priest Fr. Alexis and of course Fr. McAllister the prison Chaplin, were in constant attendance with Tom all the time he was in the death cell.
I had the privilege, with J.B. O'Hagan to serve at the Mass said on an alter erected by the now deceased Jack McNally at the bottom end of the hall. During the Mass the suspense was so intense that many of the men keeled over in faint.
J.B. and myself found it difficult to remain kneeling upright on the alter steps. Fr. Oliver himself was very visibly affected. One seemed to detect a deep sigh at the consecration which seemed to coincide with Tom's last movements.
The world was soon to be made aware of how he so nobly and courageously met his death with a smile on his lips and a prayer in his heart for God and Ireland.

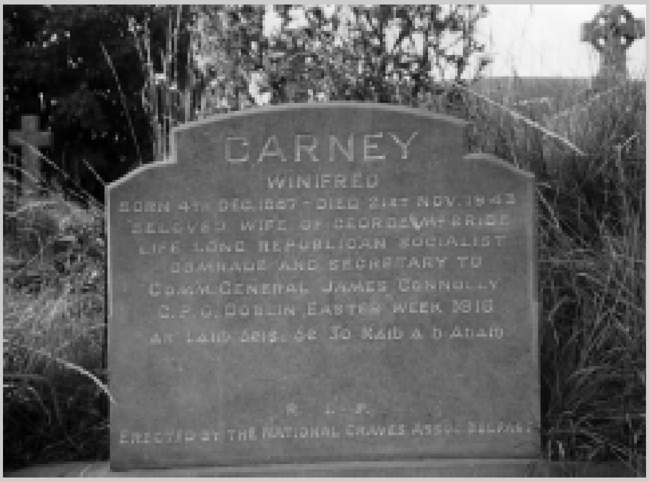
Although these are some of the thoughts and feelings that existed among the internees at the time, we were always thinking about the feelings of Tom's five comrades and the other republican prisoners in A.Wing. These must have been worse than ours, being so close to the death cell.

After a funeral Mass in St Paul's Church, Cavendish Street, on Wednesday 19th January 2000, the remains of Tom Williams were carried from the church amid a barrage of press cameras to begin the long awaited journey to Milltown.

As the Falls Road came to a standstill, people lined the footpaths, as the Nationalist community and Republicans of all shades paid their respects and witnessed an event many of the older generation thought they would never see. Black flags flew along the road as the cortege moved slowly through Beechmount and up towards Milltown, to bring to an end the struggle to have his remains removed from an unmarked prison grave.

THE GRAVE IN MILLTOWN OF TOM WILLIAMS

WINIFRED CARNEY



Close to the entrance of Milltown Cemetery is a neat limestone monument which marks the grave of a remarkable woman by the name of Winifred Carney. She, along with Charlie Monaghan, are Belfast's direct link with the Easter Rising of 1916. Born in Bangor, Co. Down, on the 4th of December 1887 into a fairly comfortable family, she was one of six children. Her mother, who was left to rear the family, had a small sweet shop for a time at No.5 Falls Road, where the Twin Spires complex stands today.

By the early part of the 20th century as Winifred was in her early twenties, she and her mother were living at 2a Carlisle Circus. By this time in her life with a good education behind her and two secretarial jobs, she became involved with the Suffragette's and then the socialist movement, meeting James Connolly for the first time while working in a small trade union office at No.50 York Street.

Through a national progression of socialist trade union activity, she moved into republicanism, joining Belfast No.1 branch of Cumann Na mBan in 1914.

As one of the few outside the republican leadership, she knew well of the forthcoming rising due to her close working relationship with James Connolly. He kept her informed of events during her visits to Belfast, and on April 14th 1916 he telegrammed her to travel to Dublin immediately.

There, she found herself in Liberty Hall typing dispatches and mobilisation orders. Known as the *Typist with the Webley,* during the fighting she was the last of the women to leave the G.P.O.

After the rising she was interned in Mountjoy Prison along with Helena Moloney and Countess Markievicz. But as the leaders including Connolly were executed by the British, Winifred was released in December 1916.

She became involved in Sinn Fein, and even stood as a candidate for Central East Belfast in the elections of December 1918. But this was a period when the Irish Parliamentary Party in Belfast under Joe Devlin had the backing of the majority of Belfast Catholics.

When the 'troubles' broke out in July 1920 in Belfast, she was once again active in Cumann Na mBan working within the 1st Battalion of the Belfast Brigade, 3rd Northern Division (Her service number was 56077)

Following the Civil War, Winifred became disillusioned with politics in the new Free State, and was critical of subsequent governments including DeValera's. She returned to her roots of socialism and labour politics. She even found time to marry a Protestant from the Shankill Road, George McBride from Crimea Street in the Shankill Road, while still remaining herself a Catholic, although critical of the church hierarchy. They set up home at No.3 Whitewell Parade on the outskirts of North Belfast. She slowly drifted from politics in the late thirties through a combination of health problems, and her friends moving to Dublin.

Winifred Carney died on November 21st, 1943 a Socialist to the end. Her brother Ernest refused to have her grave marked so that the name McBride would not appear, a final protest at marrying a Protestant. However, many years later when the Belfast National Graves discovered the final resting place of this fine woman, a headstone was erected, and an oration by Belfast Republician Liam Rice.

Charlie Monaghan, who was born in Short Strand, and who died in Co. Kerry Easter Week, 1916, becoming Ulster's first IRA martyr. As with Winifred Carney he is Belfast's connection to the Easter Rising.

THE 'NEW' REPUBLICIAN PLOT

In 1972 with the conflict at its height it became apparent that a new burial ground would be required to compensate for the death rate of IRA members. Close to the Tom Williams Plot and its extension a new piece of ground was purchased by the National Graves Association which contained 46 graves, each to accommodate four burials.
1972 would prove the worst year of the conflict with 496 deaths and 4,876 injured. The Provisional's lost 61 members, and funerals into the new burial plot were quick on coming. It should be pointed out that not all IRA fatalities are in the plot, many are buried in family burial grounds throughout the cemetery.
Perhaps the most famous from a tourist perspective of those buried in the new plot are three of the ten hunger strikers; Bobby Sands, Joe McDonnell and Kieran Doherty.

Bobby Sands was the first of the ten to die on May 5th, 1981 after 65 days, during which time in April he was elected MP for Fermanagh/South Tyrone receiving 30,000 votes. His death at the age of 27 and of those who followed him sparked the worst street fighting the North had seen since 1972. His funeral was not only the biggest to Milltown but was one of the biggest funerals ever seen in Ireland. A funeral that was covered by the worlds media.

LOYALIST MAVERICK MICHAEL STONE ATTACKS MOURNERS AT THE 'NEW' REPUBLICAN PLOT

Joe McDonnell followed Bobby Sands as the next Belfast IRA hunger striker to die. (Francis Hughes from South Derry, Raymond McCreesh from South Armagh and INLA member Patsy O'Hara from Derry had already died in line.) Aged 29, he embarked on hunger strike on Sunday, May 9th 1981, and died at 5.11am on July 8th 1981. It was perhaps predictable, as well as fitting that Joe McDonnell followed Bobby Sands on the hunger strike struggle. They were from the same mould of politically determined activists, good friends, and had been captured together. He left a wife and two children.

Kieran Doherty was 26 when he died on August 2nd 1981, after 73 days on hunger strike. A month before his death he was elected to the Dail after winning the Cavan/Monaghan constituency with 9,121 first preference votes. As with Bobby Sands and Joe McDonnell, he had been a former internee in Long Kesh, being arrested at the age of 17 in February 1973, joining his two older brothers who were both interned between 1972 and 1974. He was released in November 1975, but like many others reported back to the IRA. He was rearrested in August 1976, and after 15 months on remand in Crumlin Road Jail was sent to the H-Blocks having been sentenced to 18 years.
His name has been added to the War of Independence Memorial in Cavan town.

It was this plot that Loyalist fanatic Michael Stone attacked on the 16th of March 1988. During the funerals of three IRA members, Danny McCann, Sean Savage and Mairead Farrell who were shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar, Stone, who was among the mourners, began to throw hand grenades and shot indiscriminately into the crowds. Stone then made his way out of the cemetery towards the M1 Motorway. What Stone did not plan for was to have been chased by the mourners. He continued to throw grenades and shoot but the mourners persevered until he ran out of ammunition. He was then captured and badly beaten before being rescued by the RUC. Stone left three people dead and injured over fifty others. Those killed were 20 year old Thomas McErlean, 26 year old John Murray and 30 year old IRA member Caoimhin MacBradaigh. A permanent memorial has now been erected on this plot in memory of the three. Both the UVF and UDA denied any involvement in the attack claiming that Stone was a maverick acting on his own. When he was sentenced to a number of life terms he was placed in the UDA H. Blocks. Now released under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement Stone has been pictured at a number of UDA organised events.

ABOVE - THE 'NEW' REPUBLICAN PLOT.
BELOW - THE THREE BELFAST IRA MEMBERS FROM THE 1981 HUNGER STRIKE ARE BURIED HERE.

THE WORKERS PARTY PLOTS

Following the internal split within the IRA in 1969 and the creation of the 'Provisional' movement in December of that year, those who opted not to break remained as a socialist organisation under the title of the Official N.L.F.

However, on the 29th May 1972 the Officials called a permanent ceasefire in operations against the British but continued to engage in gun fights against their rivals in the Provisional's. By this stage the Provisional's had become the larger of the two sides and it was they who continued the fight against Britain. The Provisional's were now in reality carrying the mantle of the IRA and the Official's became the National Liberation Front (NLF). The term 'Provisional', originated after the December 1969 split, was dropped nine months later in September 1970 at an army convention. However, the term stuck as a general terminology. (For a more in depth analogy on the split refer to ***A Rebel Voice - A History of Belfast Republicanism***)

The Official's/NLF intended in pursuing a socialist political drive into politics which in turn would cause a further split of that organisation creating a more militant INLA. One of those buried in this plot is Joe McCann from the Pound Loney (Divis) who led the Official unit in the Market area. He was a charismatic figure who stayed with the Official's because they were politically motivated. But his relationship with the Dublin leadership was not a good one. He was to much a militant for them; a political figure at heart, but was all for military action. His unit was responsible for the first British Army fatality of the Official's, when it opened fire on a mobile patrol in Cromac Square killing Robert Bankier of the Royal Green Jackets on the 21st of May 1971.

Less than three months later on the 9th of August, Internment was once again introduced by the Stormont Government, and street fighting erupted as British troops laid siege to Nationalist areas.

In the Market area, a squad of Official's led by Joe McCann took over Inglis's Bakery in Eliza Street in an attempt to tie down British troops to let remaining IRA men escape. They opened fire on the soldiers from behind blazing bread vans. The encounter produced one of the most startling photographs of Internment morning, showing Joe McCann silhouetted in front of a burning vehicle with an M1 Carbine watching the flames rise as a Starry Plough flag flutters beside him.

He was a charismatic figure who like many has been shrouded in mythology; those who knew him speak well of him and his deeds, there is no doubting his daring, the very thing that led to his death. Less than a year after that action in Eliza Street, as one of the most wanted men in the North, he was shot dead unarmed, by a patrol of the Parachute Regiment at the corner of Joy Street and Hamilton Street during a visit into the Market area.

Within hours of his killing, gun battles broke out in the Divis and Turf Lodge areas. One soldier was killed and two wounded in Divis Flats, another was killed in Derry and two more wounded in Newry. Sniping and rioting was widespread in Nationalist areas as a result of his killing. A plaque commemorates his death on the spot where he was killed.

The last two names to date (September 2000) inscribed on the memorial plot is that of Jack Brady - 28th January, 1997 and Paddy McAllister - 16th September, 1998.

Jack Brady was a life long Socialist Republican originating from Kilmood Street in Ballymacarrett/Short Strand. He joined the IRA via the Fianna in that area in 1929, along with men such as Jim Straney and Willie O'Hanlon, (and later Liam Tumilson) all of whom fought in the Spanish Civil War during 1937/38.

Jack, who remained in Belfast, stayed with the IRA and was interned during the war years. He later moved to the Andersonstown area to bring up his family.

Jack Brady remained a Socialist Republican to his death.

Paddy McAllister who died in Ballymurphy in 1998, was born on the 8th January, 1909 at 81 Lincoln Street. He was the youngest of five brothers, three of whom including Paddy became involved in Republicanism, firstly through the Fianna and then the IRA.

Unemployment at home forced Paddy to emigrate to Canada in 1928. As depression worsened in the thirties, he became involved with the relief strikes of the unemployed in Vancouver. He was twice jailed for taking part in strikes. It was these convictions that made him volunteer for the war in Spain in 1937. With others he sailed from Vancouver to Dieppe in France, and then transferred by train to Perpigan, where he and his comrades crossed the Pyrenees into Spain.

After a spell of training in Figueras, he joined the MacKenzie-Papineau Battalion of the 15th International Brigade. He was wounded in the Sierra del Caballs on the Aragon Front in 1938, and while recovering in hospital the International Brigades were withdrawn from Spain. He arrived back in Belfast on Christmas Eve, 1938, but for Paddy there was no war hero's welcome.

He remained active in the trade union disputes, and worked in the shipyard during the fifties and early sixties. Living in Theodore Street, and later Osman Street, he remained loyal to the Workers Party until his death in 1998, at the age of 88.

THE IRSP/INLA PLOTS

The December 1969 split within the IRA left the Provisional's as a growing force, and as the conflict reached severe proportions in 1972, the Provisional's arose the dominant force, carrying the mantle of the IRA following the Officials ceasefire the same year. This left those remaining within the Officials feeling the need for some political rethinking, and a sense of direction in strategy. For some, there was only one course open, a return to the militant stance. They felt the leadership had failed them, and thus the Irish Republican Socialist Party came into being in December 1974. They provided an outlet for those 'Officials' who wished to return to armed struggle. The climax of this internal split came in April 1975 when it overflowed into a feud resulting in the death of the Officials officer commanding, Billy McMillen.

The IRSP's military wing, the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) had sprung on to the political landscape. Their numbers were never to reach a scale to match the IRA, but they would leave their mark on the history of the Irish conflict.

They drew their recruits mainly from the lower Falls, the Market and South Derry. Members engaged in sniping and bombings and their presence was consumed into the daily on going 'Ulster Conflict', until one day in March 1979, when a bomb explosion in the heart of London shook the British establishment. Airey Neave, the Conservative spokesman on the North was killed in a bobby trap explosion within the House of Commons carpark. He was a personal friend of the Margaret Thatcher, who became Prime Minister two months later, and a war hero.

Despite by now having experienced IRA bombings in their country, Airey Neave's death struck home. The killing was claimed by the INLA for what they said was his *rapid militarist calls for more repression against the Irish people*. (This was at a time before the IRA attacks at the Brighton Hotel where the Conservative Government were holding a conference and the mortar attack on 10 Downing Street during a War cabinet meeting) and such an attack within the compound of the British House of Commons, sent shock waves through the British Government.

The same year the IRA killed Lord Mountbatten, the Queen's uncle. Two years later, during the Hunger Strikes,

THE INLA ASSASSINATION OF AIREY NEAVE IN MARCH 1979 SHOOK THE BRITISH ESTABLISHMENT

Thatcher would not forget both killings and they obviously had a strong bearing on her opposition to political status.

In 1982, the INLA were responsible for 30 deaths 17 of whom died in an explosion at the Droppin Well in Ballykelly, Co. Derry on the 6th of December.

The bar was used by off duty British troops from the nearby Shackleton Barrack, which dominates the garrison village.

They also carried out several attacks on Loyalist paramilitary figures and Unionist politicians. Their first victim was Loyalist John McKeague, said to have been killed by members of a small INLA unit operating from the Short Strand. These attacks would continue until their ceasefire in August 1998 with one of their last victims being the notorious Loyalist killer Billy Wright who they shot dead inside the H. Blocks.

But the organisation was plagued by internal feuding, often sparked by personality problems or policy direction. These disputes resulted in some of the best figures within the organisation dying at the hands of former comrades, while during the 1981 hunger strike, three of the ten came from the INLA whose prisoners numbered some 28, against the IRA's 380.

When they called their ceasefire in August 1998, they apologised for any innocent deaths they may have caused, but refused to apologise for their war against the "British and their Loyalists associates."

On the main INLA plot in Milltown one name that stands out is that of Ronnie Bunting, one of the organisations founding members.

His background was not in the mould of the normal INLA member. He arose from a middle class Protestant background, his father being ex-British Army and hard line Unionist stalwart Major Bunting.

Ronnie Graduated from Queen's University to become a school teacher, but at the same time he grew into socialism and became involved in the Civil Rights Movement in 1968.

When the conflict broke out in 1969, his experience of witnessing social injustice and sectarian pogroms, caused him to join the IRA.

He was interned between November 1971 and April 1972 and had been active around the lower Falls area. When his political thinking moved him towards the IRSP. he was shot and wounded by the Official's in March 1975 after the split. But when the end came on the night of 15th October 1980, no shade of Republicanism were responsible for his death, as an assassination squad broke into his home in the heart of Andersonstown, and with ruthless military precision shot and killed Ronnie Bunting and his close associate Noel Lyttle, a member of the IRSP National H. Block Committee. Lyttle had just been released from the Castlereagh Interrogation Centre and was staying with the Bunting's. It was clear those who carried out the killings knew they were in a position to remove two of the IRSP's leading figures in one attack.

At the inquest Bunting's father said of his son:- *He was a virtuous and high minded man who had a keen sense of social justice and fought oppression and injustice where ever he saw it.*

Ironic words from a man who once walked side by side with Ian Paisley, and died three years later having turned his back on politics.

IPLO PLOT

The Irish People's Liberation Organisation was established in 1986-87 after breaking away from the INLA. Two of their most prominent members are named on this memorial, Gerard Steenson and Martin O'Prey. Steenson was shot dead by the INLA in March 1987 while O'Prey was shot dead by loyalists in August 1981. The other names on the memorial are those of Patrick Sullivan and Connor Maguire. The IPLO were forced to disband by the IRA in 1992.

THE POGROMS AND MILLTOWN

The partition of Ireland in the early 1920's was a dreadful time in Belfast for both sections of the community. There were many horrific murders resulting from the thousands of gun and bomb attacks throughout the city but mainly in North and East Belfast. People were also burned to death in their homes and there are even incidents where people were doused in petrol in the street and set alight. Most were Catholic and these victims were mainly buried in Milltown, their headstones today being a constant reminder of those dreadful times. There were also many state killings organised by special units of the Royal Irish Constabulary called Cromwell Clubs. Most of these were carried out to be as horrific as possible and one of the most infamous case is the brutal slaughter of the McMahon family near the New Lodge area in North Belfast.

THE MURDER OF THE Mc MAHON FAMILY

Thursday 23rd of March 1922 was just the same as any other day of the week for the people of Bel fast, depressingly cold and wet. However for many people in the city there were other more worrying events than the weather taking place all around them. As a whole the country of Ireland was split into two with the creation of the new Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State which later became the Republic of Ireland. In Belfast much of the fighting was still continuing in what could only be described as a civil war and this had been going on now for over two years, with over 300 people killed. The latest deaths had been on this date when members of the 'Anti -Treaty' I.R.A. shot dead two members of the A-Specials and a woman named Margaret Smith died of injuries she received during a Loyalist bomb attack on a group of children playing in Weaver Street on February 14th. She was the fifth to die as a result of this attack and the first adult, all the others being children.

For Owen McMahon and his family the day was just like any other with it beginning by Mr. McMahon and his manager Edward McKinney (who lived with him) opening up his public house in Ann Street. Later in the day they would have closed the Capstan Bar and then made their way to their Kinnaird Terrace home. Kinnaird Terrace is two separate rows of large Victorian houses in the Thorndale Avenue area of north Belfast. When Mr. McMahon and Mr. McKinney got home there is no doubt that they would have at one point talked about the days sporting events due to the fact that they were a sporting family and Mr. McMahon was one of the directors of Glentoran Football Club in east Belfast. The troubles were never far away and as the family were Catholic then they would have been outraged at the latest attack made by Loyalists on St. Matthews chapel in the Short Strand area and the shooting dead of a man in the nearby New Lodge Road area. The remaining members of the family who were still awake sat and had tea in the front parlour before extinguishing the gas lanterns and retiring to bed, completely unaware that in just over an hours time the name of the McMahon family was to be recorded in the history books relating to early twentieth century Irish history after an attack that became one of the most ruthless crimes ever committed in Ireland.

SLEDGEHAMMER

At approximately 1.00 am on the morning of Friday the 24th two members of a special R.I.C. unit approached a watchman who was guarding a work site at Carlisle Circus and ordered him to hand over a sledgehammer. This he did and the two men then took the tool and made their way up the Crumlin Road and along Clifton Park Avenue into the grounds of a large house which was known locally as 'Bruce's Demesne' and met up with around three others.

SMASHED IN

The home of Owen McMahon and his family was at the other end of this demesne and it was to here that the R.I.C. men made their way. On reaching Kinnaird Terrace they paused for a moment before making their way across the gravelled road to the front door of the McMahon home and there one of them produced the sledge hammer and proceeded to smash in the front door . One of the glass panels of the four panelled door smashed and they then put their hands in and unfastened the locks. After doing so they then smashed in a second hallway door. The time was 1.20am. At the same time one of the murderers went to the door of a private nursing home which was next door and banged on the door. At this stage the rest of the gang had burst through the second door of the McMahon home and he rejoined them. Approximately five minutes later they ran from the house before disappearing into the darkness of the demesne.

MR OWEN McMAHON

The following is a full account of what happened next as it appeared in that day's Belfast Telegraph newspaper:-

HELLISH BELFAST DEED

FIVE MURDERED IN ONE HOME
TWO OTHER VICTIMS DYING
MOTHER'S AWFUL ORDEAL

The most terrible assassination that has yet stained the name of Belfast took place in the early hours of this morning when four men and a boy were sent to face their Maker in the dark hour which preceded a cold spring dawn. The scene of the murders was Kinnaird Terrace, a row of spacious dwelling houses, which face the large area of country aspect in the heart of Belfast known as Bruce's Farm. Here in No.3 lived Mr. Owen McMahon, a well known city publican, and his family of six sons, his wife and niece and domestics, including his manager, a man named Edward McKinney. Mr. McMahon is the proprietor of the Capstan, Ann Street, and is one of six brothers owning licensed houses in the city. In the early hours of the morning - to be exact, at 1.20 - five assassins crept up to the house, murdered five of the occupants, two other being badly wounded. The dead are:

Owen McMahon (father) (50),
Thomas McMahon (15),
Frank McMahon (24),
Patrick McMahon (22), his sons;
Edward McKinney (25), a barman.

The wounded are two of Mr. McMahon's sons:

John McMahon (21),
Bernard McMahon (26).

MET BY MASKED FACES

The family were in bed and the house in darkness when a thunderous sound was heard in the hallway and at the street door. "It's a bomb", said Mrs. McMahon to her husband, whom she awoke. Both got up and came downstairs. On the way they were met by masked faces, which peered at them from the stair below. In the hands of the intruders they saw large revolvers. The gas had been lighted in the sitting room below, and the door of the room lay open.

What happened when the murderers sighted Mr. and Mrs. McMahon on the stairs can only be reconstructed from the evidences left this morning. The husband lies dead in the Mater Hospital and poor Mrs. McMahon is unconscious mercifully, of all that happened, she is being in a stupor in Mrs. Purdy's next door. The murderers seem to have collected the women folk - Mrs. McMahon, her niece and daughter - and put them into a back room on the first floor. They then proceeded upstairs and awakened the men folk, and ordered them downstairs at the point of a revolver. Down they came in their shirts by candle light, for the gang had brought with them a three pound packet of candles, and some of those partly burned were found all over the house. When the lot were gathered in the parlour there was a pause.

FEW MINUTES TO PRAY

The leader of the assassins told the terror-stricken victims to avail themselves of the few moments left to pray for their souls. The imagination may conjure up the scene, for the pools of blood in the room tell silently the position of the slain, whilst bullet marks indicate where the assassins fired from. Near the window, beside the fire, stood Mr. McMahon, one of his sons, and the barman. On the other side was another son , and on the chair near the door was was the third. Just as the men prayed, and whilst the wife and mother begged in the name of all sacred in the hall for the lives of her loved ones, the revolvers spoke rapidly and deadly, and one by one the victims fell, and blood began to stain the floor and cover it like a carpet

Thomas, the youngest of the injured, was only fifteen years and he succumbed immediately. The others lingered on and weltered in their life blood, but horror was added to the scene when the shots intended for the youngest victim of all, a boy of eleven years, missed, and the lad, shrieking with fright, ran round the dining-room table. Two shots were fired at him as he ran, and these riccochetted off its polished surface into the walls. The boy got under the table and hid under the sofa, being discovered when rescuers entered, as will be told later.

VANISHED IN THE DARKNESS

In all the murderers were not more than five or six minutes in the house, and having satisfied blood lust in its most terrible form they disappeared over the light paling that separates Bruce's farm from Kinnaird Terrace and were lost in the darkness.
Whilst the murders were being carried out the tragic doings were heard by three separate sets of people. The front door had been smashed in as if with a sledge hammer, and the glass panels broken, and this awakened the neighbours on both sides - Mrs. McMurtry, matron of the Kinnaird Nursing Home, and her staff of nurses, who live on one side of the doomed home, and Mrs. Purdy and her family, who live on the other. The story of the tragedy as known to both families is told in interviews given elsewhere. The third party to hear the noise was a patrol of police who were on the Antrim Road. They heard the shooting - one volley after another - and, drawing their revolvers, they hurried to investigate. Coming up Kinnaird Street they went into Thorndale Avenue but all was quiet there. Having examined the street, they went by Kinnaird

THE MURDER VICTIMS LYING IN THE MATER HOSPITAL MORGUE. IN THE CENTRE IS THE BODY OF OWEN MC MAHON SURROUNDED BY HIS TWO SONS FRANK AND PATRICK. ON THE EXTREME LEFT OF THE PICTURE IS GEARLD MC MAHON WHO WAS THE YOUNGEST OF THE VICTIMS AND ON THE RIGHT IS MR. MC MAHON'S BAR MANAGER EDWARD MC KINNEYy

Terrace, where they discovered the secret of the reports they heard.

HORRIFYING SPECTACLE

The door of No.3 Kinnaird Terrace lay open. The porch was full of broken glass. On a chair in the hall sat a young man in his shirt gasping his life out. The sitting room gas was burning brightly, and the room was an indescribable scene. Men lay dead and dying in bunches. Mr. McMahon, senior, was writhing in agony on the floor. Of the women folk there was no sign, they being in the back room at the time the police came.

Knocking up the neighbours the patrol had ambulances sent for, and the dead and dying were removed to the Mater Hospital. The ambulance corps, accustomed by now to bloody scenes, worked quietly and expeditiously, and the Mater Hospital staff, doctors and nurses alike, worked nobly to alleviate the sufferings of those still alive. Carried in dead were Thomas McMahon (15 years), Patrick (22 years), Frank (24 years), and the barman, a Donegall man, aged 25 years. Mr. McMahon, senior, lived on in agony until this morning when at seven o'clock he died.

It is not true that one of the ambulance men fainted. All retained their calm, and even Mr. Hamill, manager for Mrs. Purdy, who lives with her, and who was the first civilian on the scene, and who accompanied the ambulance, kept up until all was over, when he collapsed a nervous wreck.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Purdy and her family took Mrs. McMahon, her niece, and daughter into her house, where they were seen by a doctor, and put to bed. Naturally all three are collapsed and quiet unable to give any account of what occurred, the facts above being gained from them before the full horror of the scene had affected their minds, and brought unconsciousness.

A VERITABLE BLOODBATH

A "Telegraph" representative visited the scene this morning and saw the horrors left by the murderers in all their freshness. The house smelt of fresh blood - it seemed scarcely cold as it spread in large pools and small rivers all over the shamble room. The front door lay open as the murderers had left it. Police were in charge, but there was no curious crowd - the thing was too horrid or the neighbourhood too quiet for the sensation monger to have gathered in force. Over the fields facing the house police could be seen in knots of twos and threes searching for traces of the murderers.

The front door is panelled at the top with two plates of opaque glass. One of these was smashed in and the latch - a multiple lever of old pattern - lifted. The visitors then apparently found that the door held by the box lock lower down, and they abandoned the attempt to enter through the panel, and brought a sledge to bear. The mark of one tremendous blow which sunk into the wood near the "big" lock shows how the door was crashed in and the staples of both latch and main lock wrenched from their places.

This gave the gang entrance to the porch, and here they were faced by a hall door fastened with locked mortise lock and bolted with a brass bolt. The hammer was again

used here, but the mortise lock held, and the large glass panel forming the upper portion of the door was crashed in and completely removed even to the little pieces which the lathes would hold.

The murderers apparently climbed through the open space or opened the lock from the back and got into the hall. Here, hanging on the hallstand, were the hats and coats of the men who were murdered, and on the hallstand table is a packet of No.8 candles, which had been torn open and a dozen or so candles taken out. A couple unused lay beside the packet, and the others were found in the parlour or sitting room and in various parts of the house, these being slightly burned and affording an indication of the shortness of the stay of the murderers.

SCENE LIKE A SLAUGHTER HOUSE

The sitting room door lay open, and here a scene like a slaughter house stall with furniture arranged in it to make a living room of it presented itself to the gaze. On either side of the fireplace lay large pools of blood - thick, heavy, coagulated stuff, that turned one sick with horror. In places it was rubbed and disturbed as if some-one had rolled in it; in others it lay spread level and shining dark red, and in others it was clotted in lumps as if someone had lacerated a fresh bullock's liver and strewn it about.

The largest pool was next the window, a considerable space on the opposite side was blood covered, and near the door on the left hand side going in and beneath a chair was the smallest blood spill. Here the walls are perforated with bullet marks, which tore their way through the skirting. The mirror of the side board is smashed in one place, with radiating shivers from all over the whole surface. On the sideboard is a marble clock frame with the body removed as if for repairs - indeed it is remarkable that every clock found in the house is out of order.

The dining room table shows two tears made by bullets as they glanced off it on the edge nearest the window. These bullets are supposed to have been fired at the eleven years old boy who escaped. On the table are the remains of the supper taken by some of the victims - a jug of milk, butter, sugar, tea cups, bread, oatcake etc., whilst on the fireplace was an eiderdown quilt and a woman's jacket. In the room was found the empty shell of a Webley revolver cartridge of service pattern.

DRIED BLOODSTAINED HANDS

Below the table, just where the bullet marks are, is a single blood blot about the size of a five shilling piece. On the floor near the largest blood pool lay a barmans white apron, perfectly clean as to the edges, but soaked in blood in the centre as if someone had dried blood-stained hands or face on it.

On the sideboard and beside the dismantled clock already spoken of was an empty five naggin whiskey bottle, smelling strongly and freshly of whiskey. Beside it was a half pint bottle without label or cork, but also pungent with the new fumes of whisky.

From this scene of blood, terror, and desolation the "Telegraph" man went to the kitchen and back part of the ground floor of the house.

The pantry, reached first, contained nothing unusual, there being the usual furnishings of delph, etc., undisturbed. A sharp turn in a little narrow passage gave into the kitchen, the door of which opens on a window into the yard, and which is the only natural light the apartment possesses. Here on a couch lay a tiger cat asleep.

On the floor were a couple of pairs of men's boots, and on a table a bowl of oatmeal porridge, and a jug of milk, apparently intended as the supper of some inmate of the house. The cat looked up sleepily as the visitor entered and turned to sleep again.

Up the stairs, down which a few hours before frightened men and boys had come to their deaths, the first room to be entered was a back bedroom. Here a bed disturbed as if someone left it hurriedly - on a chair at one side an alarm clock ticked away loudly. The alarm clock had gone off, but at what time could not be told without experiment, for the alarm hand was missing.
On the other side on another chair was a pair of men's garters, and a book from the school library called "The Dumb Princess." On the other dressing table was a woman's summer hat apparently discarded by someone years ago. On the same landing is a drawing room and bathroom, both undisturbed and showing no sign of tragedy save utter emptiness and the loneliness that prevails over the human dwelling when death comes in so terrible a form.

BED AS SHELTER

In still another bedroom the bed has been pulled out from the wall and there are signs of struggle. Probably the victim had jumped out of bed and got behind it or under it when the noises first came, and had been dragged forth to his death. On the bedpost hung the brown suit of a schoolboy, with a little green tie. On the floor were black stockings, very much worn and boots. In the pockets of the suit were found a spinning top, known to the school boy of Belfast as a "peery," a school rubber, a handkerchief, and the string used for kite flying wound on a piece of wood notched to retain it.
In Franks room there were signs also of a defence having been put up. On the floor beside the bed were his black leggings, grey socks with suspenders, and boots. His clothes hung also on the bed, and there was additional clothing on the doorback. On the fireplace

was a soft blue collar and silk knitted tie just as they had been left off when the victim retired.

In neither of the bedrooms yet described could be seen any bedclothes, but in the front bedroom, on the next landing the bedclothes lay in a heap on the floor as if the murderers had found the occupants sleeping and had dragged them away. Two pillows dented showed that the bed had held two sleepers.

In still another room was a mahogany bed with old fashioned over curtains at the top. In this room a set of false teeth lay on a table, and scattered around were articles of clothing.

The attics were also occupied, there being beds in each, and probably these were for the servants, of whom two, a cook and housemaid, were kept. The housemaid had left a few days before and had not been replaced, whilst the cook was also absent at the time of the tragedy, she being in hospital with the flu.

In the back bedroom leaning against the bed was a newly enamelled bicycle done at home in the 'all black' style, and evidently left there to dry by the owner, who now lies dead, one of the victims of the most dreadful midnight assassination that has yet been chronicled of the bloody times through which Ulster is at present passing.

"SHOOTING GOING ON - GET UP"

Mr. Arthur Hamill, manager for Mrs. Purdy who lives next door to the McMahon's was, as already stated, the first civilian on the scene, and how he described in graphic sentences how he discovered the tragedy, and how he acted when the first shock of the dreadful occurrence had passed away.

Mr. Hamill lives with his employer, and long years of acquaintanceship and service have made him practically one of the family. He retired to bed about the usual time and slept soundly until as near as he can place it a quarter past one o'clock, when he was awakened by Miss Purdy, Mrs. Purdy's daughter, who knocked at his door and called, "Do you hear the shooting ?" He said "No," and she replied "There is shooting going on; get up." He replied, knowing that the jail wall bounded portion of the fields outside, "It may be the police firing at the jail," but Miss Purdy was not to be reassured, and she still cried for him to get up.

The terror stricken voice of the girl as she battered at the door caused Mr. Hamill to spring from bed, and as he put on his trousers he heard bang after bang as if the shooting was in the very house with him, and then long and terrible screams of agony, which almost froze the blood in his veins. Coming out of his bedroom in his bare feet he met Mrs. Purdy and Miss Purdy on the stairs.

LOUD KNOCKING AT DOOR

Both were in terror as he made his way down stairs in the darkness. Entering the dining room on the ground floor he peeped through the blind and saw brilliant light streaming from the McMahon's dining room window. As he looked a loud knock came to the door of the house in which he was, and the womenfolk screamed aloud at the sound. Almost distracted, Mr. Purdy called "who's there," and the reply came "police on duty."

Reassured he opened the door, and found there a patrol of police who had just come from the Antrim Road. With the patrol Mr. Hamill went to the house of horror to find the state of affairs already described, only in their pristine freshness

In the hall sitting on a chair in the light shed through the dining room door he saw young John McMahon in his shirt and with blood gushing from his body in streams. Mr. Hamill made to go to his assistance, but the glass spattered all around cut his feet and he had to return to the house for shoes. Having donned them he went to the assistance of young McMahon whom he thought at that time was the only victim. "When I got in I saw Mrs. McMahon. I threw her my dressing-gown to put around John," and went on and looked into the dining room.

"ROOM OF DEAD AND DYING."

"It seemed full of men dead and dying. Streams of blood were everywhere, and Mr. McMahon, sen., was rolling about the floor. The sight dazed me and I have been shaking since. It's terrible."

As he spoke, Mr. Hamill put his hand over his eyes as if to shut out the sight and remained almost sobbing for a moment or two. His deep emotion was pardonable under the terrible circumstances. Mr. Hamill then told of the coming of the ambulance and of helping to take the victims to the Mater. He was full of praise for the hospital staff. The nurses and doctors were wonderful, he said - marvellous. They worked swiftly and did all they could for the comfort and succour of the living. Mr. Hamill gave the lie to the story that an ambulance man fainted. "They acted splendidly," he said, " But I must confess I was glad of the tot of stimulant a doctor kindly gave all hands when the rescue work was done." Speaking of the victims he regretfully referred to Mr. McMahon and his sons. Quiet, decent neighbours, one and all, they were, he said.

SCREAMS AND FRENZIED APPEALS.

Mrs. McMurtry, the matron of the Kinnaird Private Nursing Home, which is next door to where the ghastly murders were committed, told what she knew of the awful affair to a "Telegraph" representative.

It was quarter past one this morning when we were awakened by one of the nurses tapping at the bedroom door, with the information that something had happened in the terrace. The nurses had been awakened by a terrible battering on the door of Mr. McMahon's house, and so great was the uproar that it was at first thought that a bomb had been thrown and exploded in the street. The matron did not hear any of this, and in

explanation she said that her room is away from the main body of the house. She also stated that having been through the war, she is not easily disturbed by noises in the night.
After the first onslaught on the home of the McMahon's, the murderers turned their attentions to the Nursing Home - for what reason is not known - and an imperative summons on the front door was immediately answered by one of the nurses, who asked what was wanted. There was no response, but the crunching of the gravel on the footpath told of the hurried departure of whoever had been knocking. There was renewed battering at Mr. McMahon's door, and the further crash of breaking glass. This was followed by loud screams for help, and a woman's voice was heard shouting "Matron, send for the police." Mrs. McMurtry immediately informed Glenravel Street Barracks. She did not hear any shooting, but one of the nurses conveyed to her the intelligence that a volley of shots had been discharged during the time she was speaking on the telephone. There was a repetition of the awful heart rendering screams, and again the same woman's voice - Mrs. McMurtry thinks it was Mrs. McMahon's - this time loudly calling "Matron ring to the hospitals and get ambulances." Almost immediately one of the nurses told her of running men, departing after their foul deeds had been committed.

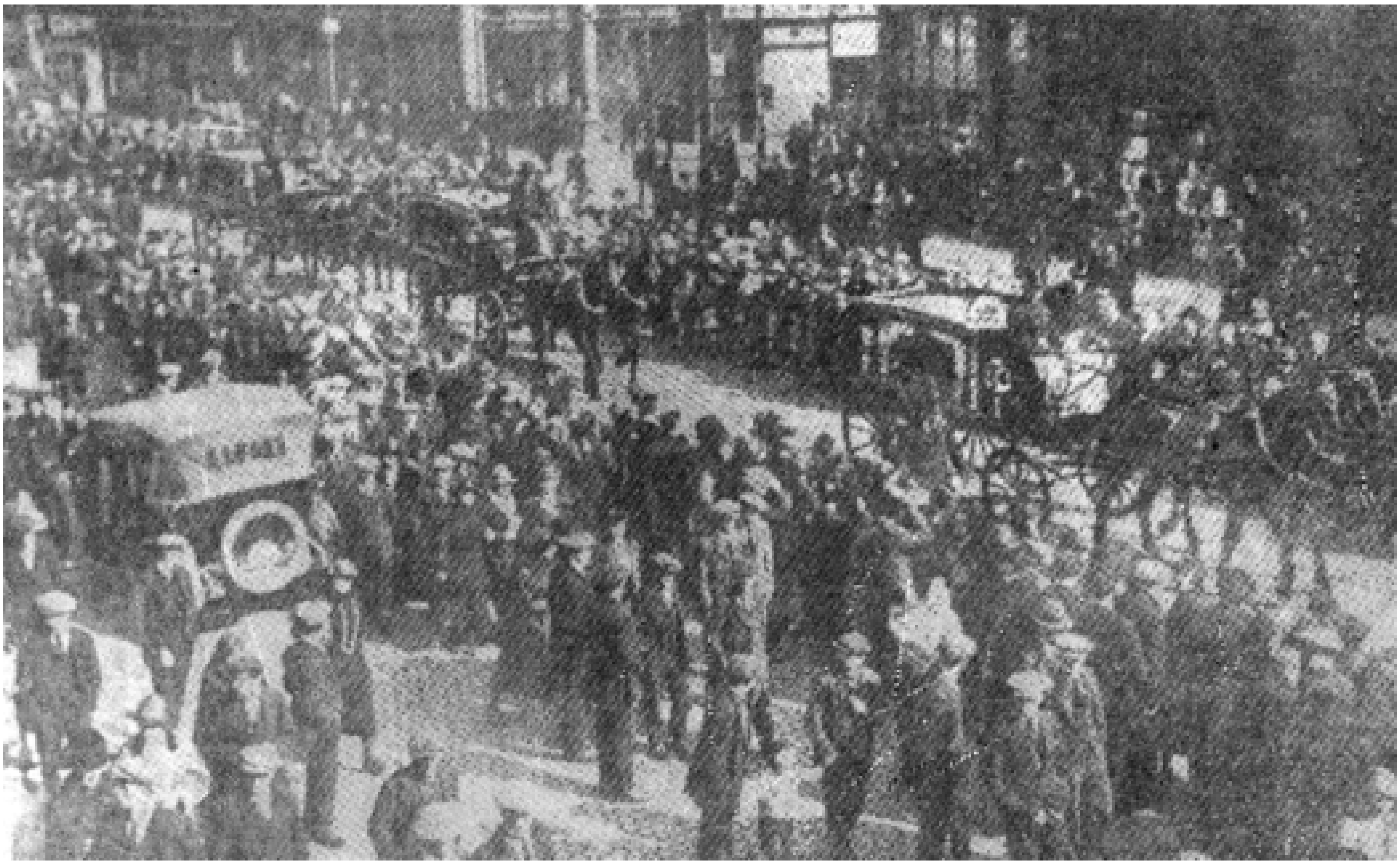
Mrs. McMurtry again got on the telephone and called for the ambulance, and thoughtfully rang up the hospital and asked the staff there to prepare beds for the wounded.
The matron added that the street lamp, which is just opposite Mrs. McMahon's house, was burning brightly all the time. Asked if she knew what direction the murderers had gone the narrator replied in the negative, and said that until the arrival of the police no one went outside the Nursing Home.
The police were on the scene in a few minutes, and it was then that the occupants of the Kinnaird Nursing Home learned of the atrocities that had been perpetrated almost under their very eyes. Mrs. McMurtry concluded her narrative with a tribute to the splendid conduct of the patients of the Home, who although terribly alarmed with the thoughts of what could be happening, kept quite cool and collected throughout.

McMAHON FAMILY AND BELFAST.

Mr. Owen McMahon, the murdered head of the household, was well known in Belfast sporting circles. Like his five brothers, he came to Belfast, and engaged in the licensed business while a young man. He was a member of a County Down farming family, and in his younger days was an athlete of much note. As president of the now dormant Ivy Cycling Club, he took a great interest in its affairs and presented a championship cup for a twenty mile road race. He was also a director of the Glentoran Football Club. Like himself, his sons took part in sport of the day, and were generally recognised as quiet and inoffensive young men. Mr. Owen McMahon owned the "Capstan Bar" in Ann Street, which a few months ago he had remodelled on up-to-date lines, and a full account of the improvements appeared in the "Telegraph" of the current date. He took little part in modern politics, being a Nationalist of the old school and a staunch supporter of Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P.

Of his five brothers, Bernard formerly owned "The Great Eastern," Ballymacarrett, which was burned down during the disturbances two years back. Tom, another brother, has the controlling interest of the "International" at the corner of Donegall Street and York Street. Patrick owns "The Century" at the junction of Garfield Street and North Street, while Daniel holds a house at Dee Street, Newtonards Road, and John a hostelry at Henry Street. Tom, in addition to the "International," also controls a house at Whitewell, Antrim Road, he having a few months ago given up the "Glengormley Arms," a favourite end-of-the-tramline Sunday evening resort.

THE McMAHON GRAVE IN MILLTOWN



THE FUNERAL OF THE McMAHON'S MAKES ITS WAY ALONG ROYAL AVENUE

THE FUNERALS

Irish News, Saturday 25th March 1922

McMahon - March 24, Killed at their residence, 3 Kinnaird Terrace, Antrim Road, Owen McMahon and his three sons Frank, Patrick and Gerald. - R. I. P. Funerals will leave St. Patrick's Church, Donegall Street, on to-morrow (Sunday), at 2 o'clock, for interment in Milltown Cemetery.

Elizabeth McMahon

The following report on the funerals of the McMahon family appeared in the Irish News on Monday, 27th of March 1922.

MURDER VICTIMS
Funeral of the McMahon family

The funerals of the late Mr. Owen McMahon and his three sons Frank, Patrick and Gerald, who were brutally murdered in their home, No.3 Kinnaird Terrace, Antrim Road, on Friday morning took place yesterday afternoon to Milltown Cemetery, amidst scenes of mourning unprecedented in the history of the city.

The remains were removed on Saturday evening from the Mater Hospital to St. Patrick's Church, where the four coffins were placed side by side in the Sacred Heart Chapel. During the evening the church was visited by hundreds of mourners, who passed the remains and kneeling before the Altar offered up fervent prayers for the souls of the deceased. Affecting scenes were witnessed, many persons, mainly women and children and children, breaking down and weeping. The church was thronged at all masses yesterday, when the fervent prayers of the congregation were offered up for the victims.

Addressing the congregation at the 7 and 8 o'clock Masses, Rev. Bernard Laverty, Adm., paid touching and eloquent tributes to the deceased, who had, he said, led exemplary Christian lives. The world, he continued, stood aghast at the terrible tragedy that had been enacted in their midst. The late Mr. McMahon and his boys were inoffensive citizens who had taken no part in politics, and they had been done to death merely because they were Catholics. Many shocking crimes had been perpetrated by the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries in other parts of Ireland, but they had not been guilty of anything approaching this in its unspeakable barbarity. He referred to the terror at present prevailing in the city, and said the Catholic people were on trail. He exhorted them to pray for peace, to practise patience and forbearance, and not to give offence and in God's good time all would be well.

The funerals took place at two o'clock. Long prior to that hour people began to assemble in the vicinity, and at the appointed hour there was a huge crowd which practically filled the upper portion of Donegall Street. The scene as the four coffins were borne from the church and placed in as many hearses was deeply affecting. The first hearse contained the remains of the father, and the others of the three sons in order of age. While the remains were being

removed the crowd stood in absolute silence, the menfolk with heads uncovered, while many of the women and girls gave way to tears as the mournful procession moved off on the journey to Milltown Cemetery. It was indeed a pitiful spectacle, made all the more tragic in the brilliant sunshine of a glorious spring day when nature was at her best.

THOUSANDS ALONG THE ROUTE

The route was via Royal Avenue, Castle Street, and Falls Road. At first the mourners marched in processional order four deep, but this was only possible along the city's leading thoroughfares and up Castle Street. Thereafter the road was thronged with thousands of people of all ages and stations of life. They stood in respectful silence and saluted the remains as they passed, after which most of them, including the women and children, joined in the cortege until in a very short time it had assumed very large proportions. Such was the order all the way until, by the time the first hearse had reached the cemetery gates, the gathering was immense. Certainly not less than 10,000 people participated in the mournful proceedings; and it is no exaggeration to say that never before has such a public tribute to the dead been witnessed in Belfast.

Though trouble was not anticipated, the military authorities took ample precautions to ensure that no untoward incident should mar the melancholy occasion. An armoured car, manned by two gunners, moved slowly ahead of the hearses, while pickets were posted at all the danger points along the Falls Road. While the cortege was composed in the main of the working people of the Falls Road and other Catholic districts of the city, it included many hundreds of business and personal friends of the late Owen McMahon, and companions of the dead boys.

BISHOP AND CLERGY

His Lordship the most Rev. Dr. MacRory, Lord Bishop of Down and Connor, walked all the way in the cortege, as also did many clergy. Amongst the priests present were: - Venerable Archdeacon Convory, St. Paul's; Very Rev. Canon Crolly, St. Matthew's; Rev. H. L. Murray, Adm., St. Mary's; Rev. J. Hassan, St. Mary's; Rev. R. McCrudden, St. Mary's; Rev. B. Laverty, Adm., St. Patrick's; Rev. J. P. Napier, St. Patrick's; Rev. P. J. O' Kelly, St. Patrick's; Rev. P. Black, St. Patrick's; Rev. Father Cleary. There were several other clergy present, including a number of Missioners who are conducting Retreats in the city churches; but so dense was the throng that their names could not be obtained. Amongst the laity were Messrs. Joseph Devlin, M.P. (for many years a close personal friend of the late Mr. McMahon), and C. J. France, a prominent American, who has been directing the White Cross relief work in Ireland for many months past, and has been responsible for the alleviation of much suffering in Belfast.

SCENE IN THE CEMETERY

The scene in Milltown Cemetery was one which can never be forgotten by those who participated in it. Large crowds of women and children who had already arrived lined the paths and the surrounding area as the cortege entered, and soon there was a vast crowd around the grave which was to receive the mortal remains of the four victims. As the four coffins were removed from the hearses and carried to their last resting place a great silence fell over the throng. Then in a few minutes the silence was broken by the inspiring strains of "Faith of our Fathers," which was sung by a large section of the crowd, who also joined in a truly devotional rendering of the Hymn to the Blessed Virgin and of the Hymn to the Sacred Heart as the remains were being lowered into the grave in the order in which they had been borne to the cemetery.

THE CHIEF MOURNERS

By the graveside stood the bereaved widow and mother, who had been assisted from the hospital to pay the last good - bye on earth to those she loved so dearly. By her side was her daughter, Lily, and not the least pathetic figure of all was her little eleven year old son, Michael, who had so narrowly escaped the fate of his poor father and brothers. The lad had walked all the way with his uncles and other relatives behind the remain to the cemetery. He bore up wonderfully almost to the very end, but the strain proved almost too much for him, and he had to be assisted away by kind friends. The chief mourners, in addition to these included the five brothers of the father, namely, John, Patrick, Daniel, Thomas and Bernard McMahon; Francis Downey and John Ryan (brothers-in-law), Rev. Daniel Fegan, Edward, John and Daniel Fegan, Daniel, Michael, John and Peter McConnville, Michael Lennon and John Fitzpatrick (cousins); William Leonard, and James Flanigan, and Charles Murnin (relatives.)

BISHOP OFFICIATES

His Lordship the Bishop officiated at the graveside, being assisted by Father Laverty, Adm. Beautiful wreaths were sent by Mrs. McMahon and family, the five brothers, and many personal and business friends. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs. Hugh O'Kane and Co., Ltd.

THE Co. DONEGAL VICTIM

The funeral took place at Buncrana yesterday of Mr. Edward McKinney, Mr. McMahon's manager, who was shot dead with Mr. McMahon and his sons. Horror and indignation was expressed on every side at the dreadful crime, and there was a remarkable attendance of mourners from the town and countryside - R. I. P.

THE FIFTH VICTIM

On the 2nd of April 1922 the eldest of Mr. McMahon's sons, Bernard, died as a result of his injuries received during the attack. He had been removed from the Mater Hospital and detained in St. John's private hospital on the Crumlin Road.

WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE

In the years that followed the McMahon family murders it has been stated time and time again that the attack was carried out by members of the B-Specials and that it was an act of retaliation after the I.R.A. killings of two 'Specials' in May Street the day before. The assumption that it was B-Specials arose after John McMahon (who survived the attack) gave the following statement from his bed in the Mater Hospital.

"This morning about one o' clock I heard the hall door being smashed in. Five men rushed up the stairs and ordered my brothers and myself and Edward McKinney out on the landing. Four of the five men were dressed in the uniform of the R.I.C. but from the appearance I know they are 'Specials' not regular R.I.C. One was in plain clothes. They ordered us downstairs. When we got down they lined us up in the room below, my father, my four brothers, Edward McKinney and myself, against the wall. The leader said, "You boys say your prayers,' and at the same time he and the others fired volley after volley at us. I think I lay on the floor for half an hour before the ambulance came. Three or four regular R.I.C. came too. "

There is no doubt that some members of the B-Specials were present at the McMahon killings but it must be remembered that the 'Specials' were in fact mere 'helpers' to those who were involved in the planning and carrying out of such attacks and who were all members, and in most cases high ranking members, of the R.I.C.

District Inspector Nixon and County Inspector Harrison, head of the Belfast Detective Division, were the men who were given a free hand in organising the Belfast R.I.C. and 'Specials' in north and west Belfast into 'counter-insurgency units' and it was they who had organised and carried out numerous murders against Catholics in many areas.

After the McMahon murders affidavits (written declarations on oath) were obtained by the Free State Government testifying to Nixon and Harrison. These were made by Roman Catholic members of the R.I.C who were shocked and outraged at these planned murders being carried out against their fellow co-religionists.

The statements were gathered by numerous Catholic clergy who gave them to Mr. P. O'Drisell who in turn delivered them to Michael Collins who was Commander-in-Chief of the National Army. Collins himself also had many informers within the R.I.C. and also within the Northern Ireland Government and all the information he received from these sources was very similar to the information within the statements.

In Belfast his main informant within the R.I.C. was Sergeant Matt MacCartny and Constable Furlong and it was Furlong who gave him a very detailed statement informing him of all those who were involved in the murder of the McMahon family.

The following is a list of names of those involved with Nixon and Harrison in the murders of innocent Roman Catholics. The names appear in the affidavits and in the intelligence reports which were supplied to Michael Collins and which were later put together in a detailed Ministry of Defence report. The names were as follows;

County Inspector Harrison.
District Inspector Nixon.
Sergeant Glover.
Sergeant Clarke.
Sergeant Hicks.
Head Constable Giff.
Head Constable Puckenham.
Constable Golding.
Constable Sterrit.
Constable Gordon.
Constable Cooke.
Constable Norrion.

All this group, with the exception of Harrison and Nixon, was just one of the so called 'Cromwell Clubs' which were established in Belfast. These clubs were initially set up by the Unionist Party and was just one of the many groups springing up in Protestant areas such as the 'Tigers' and the 'Loyalist Association.' These gangs organised themselves into so called defence units and attacked Catholics when the opportunity arose. It was these 'defence units' that forced thousands of Catholics from their places of work the most notable being the Belfast ship yard Harland & Wolff. When the Unionist Party set up the 'Cromwell Club' its chief organiser was Sergeant William McCartney of Musgrave R.I.C. Barrack and their purpose was to carry out acts of retaliation whenever members of the R.I.C. and 'Specials' were shot by the I.R.A., however there are historians who believe that the purpose of the 'Cromwell Clubs' (and the name alone would support this) was to drive all the Catholics out of the new 'Ulster' state. There are also cases where theses units actually shot dead R.I.C. constables themselves to ensure that they would be ordered out. The constables they shot were usually Catholic and one such case of this happening is the event which occurred in the Carrick Hill area of Belfast - the Arnon Street Massacre

THE ARNON STREET MASSACRE

On the night of April 1st 1922 regular R.I.C. Constable George B. Turner was on patrol on Peter's Hill with a member of the B-Specials. Just after 11 o' clock a sniper opened fire on the pair and a bullet struck Constable Turner. The bullet entered through the back of his head and came out through his mouth, he died instantly. The Special who was with him then ran to the nearby Brown Square barracks and reported what had happened. A short time later R.I.C. Constable Gordon entered the barrack guard room, seized a sledge hammer, (reported to have been the same hammer used in the McMahon attack,) and called for volunteers for a reprisal. The killing was the excuse Nixon (who was based in Brown Square) had needed and was waiting for. He immediately organised his murder squad and a number of 'Specials' and ordered them into the barrack lorries and tenders. They then drove out and into the nearby Nationalist area of Carrick Hill. What was to follow rivalled the McMahon family murders in its savagery and ruthlessness. The murder squad arrived first in Stanhope Street and jumping from their lorries they began to smash their way into the houses. At the same time a Lancia armoured car was firing indiscriminately through the windows and doors not caring whether or not if it was men, women or children who were behind them.

JOSEPH WALSH IN HIS MILITARY UNIFORM ALONG WITH 7 YEAR OLD MICHAEL WALSH

"LOOK AT DADDY"

The first house to be attacked was number 15 Stanhope Street and after forcing an entry they came across Joseph McRory, aged 40, whom they ordered to put his hands up. McCrory placed his hands above his head exclaiming 'Oh, son, I never harmed anyone.' 'None of your sonning me,' was the reply before Joseph McCrory was shot dead. The killers then burst into a few more houses but left when the found no men present within them. At the same time a different group burst into number 26 Park Street where they came upon a sailor, who had just returned from sea, named Bernard McKenna. Rushing up the narrow staircase and into the small bedroom they found McKenna standing near the fire and shot him eight times killing him instantly. Mr. McKenna was the father of seven young children. The next house singled out for attack was number 16 Arnon Street. A man named William Spallin lived here and that very day he had buried his wife. Mr. Spallin was seventy years old and was in bed with his twelve year old grandchild. When the 'Cromwell Club' members burst into his bedroom they aimed their weapons at the pensioner and shot him dead were he lay. A short time later the young child was found sitting up in bed gazing in horror at the murdered man crying 'look at daddy.'

BEATEN AND SHOT

Number 12 Arnon Street was the next home to be forced into. In this house lived the Walsh family and the two adult men who lived here were both ex-soldiers who had fought in the Great War. As the R.I.C. were beating the front door the mother thought it wise to open it and let the police enter as she thought it was just another raid. As soon as the door opened the armed gang pushed their way past the frightened woman and pushed them to the ground. They then proceeded up the stairs and into the bedroom where they found Joseph Walsh in bed with his seven year old son Michael and and two year old daughter Brigid. They then dragged Joseph Walsh from the bed and threw him to the floor where they smashed in his head with a sledgehammer. He died instantly. The gang then opened fire on the two screaming children and both were hit a number of times. The girl survived but the boy died a short time afterwards. Fourteen year old Frank Walsh was shot and beaten in the kitchen and survived as did Joseph Walsh's brother who had hid in the yard with two young children.

REQUIRED EXCUSE

Nixon's excuse to launch this attack was that constable Turner was shot from this area, but was he ?

At this period the area was under the control of the 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade I.R.A. and all their arms and movement of members in the district were all accounted for at the time the R.I.C. constable was shot, so if it was not the I.R.A. who shot him then who was it? Nixon and

his murder squad said that he was shot from Stanhope Street and that is the reason why they attacked this area but what really happened was a simple plan conducted by Nixon to gain an excuse to attack the area. Constable Turner was shot dead by one of his fellow officers from the roof of nearby Brown Square barracks. The spot in which he was shot could in no way be seen from the Stanhope Street area. In this area the main sniper activity itself came mainly came from the roof of Brown Square barracks as snipers had fired from here on numerous occasions beforehand, however the wound which Constable Turner received would also suggest that he had been shot from this place. The spot he was shot at was near the Peter's Hill baths and the bullet fired came through the top of his head and out through his mouth, this alone suggests that he was shot from a high position and the nearest high building was Brown Square barracks.

EYEWITNESSES

This is just one of the many occasions in which the R.I.C. sought to create their own excuse to murder Catholics. They had at times also fired on the military based in the nearby Victoria Barracks with the intentions of getting them to 'shoot-up' Catholic areas but the military were mainly aware of this. It is also another of the many incidents in which District Inspector Nixon showed his absolute brutality in the killing of completely innocent Roman Catholics. As stated there are many many more incidents including the 'reprisal' killings in Millfield after two 'Specials' were shot dead by the I.R.A. in July 1922. On this occasion Nixon ordered out every available armoured car and men. They then set off to the nearby Millfield area and once there raked the whole area with machine-gun fire before bursting into many houses. When they left fourteen people lay dead or badly injured. Although their main plan was to shoot male Catholics (one case being the McMahon family) there are also incidents were Nixon was seen by eyewitnesses who recognised him and who made statements testifying that he openly shot at and killed women and children. One incident of this is the shooting of the Walsh children but others have included the shooting of a four year old girl named Skillen who was shot dead on the Crumlin Road and also of a baby boy who was shot dead as his sister held him in her arms in Upper Library Street.

BRUTAL KILLER

Another member of this unit who was particularly brutal in his method of killing. It was Head Constable Giff who tried to ensure that his victims died a slow and painful death and one of the ways in which he done this was by using his bayonet before shooting them as he considered it prolonged their agony. The wounds he usually attempted to inflict on his Catholic victims were the same wounds as those suffered by Christ on his hands and feet. There are many cases of Giff doing this but two of the most brutal cases were in the murders of James Gaynor of 136 Springfield Road and Malachy Halfpenny of 21 Herbert Street in the Ardoyne area. On the 26th of September 1920 at around midnight three units of these 'Cromwell Clubs' left their barrack at Springfield Road under the command of County Inspector Harrison. Harrison ordered them to the home of Edward Trodden on the Falls Road and murdered him. The other unit went to the home of James Gaynor and after bursting their way in shot him in his bedroom. Giff, before leaving, stabbed him with his bayonet and left him to die in agony. As they were leaving the house Giff grabbed the mans mother and beat her and then left.

THE HALFPENNY MURDERS

What this 'Cromwell Club' seemed to be doing was to try and commit the most brutal murders possible in order to terrify the rest of the community. Many historians believe that the reason behind this was to drive them out of Northern Ireland and into the Free State. Some historians also add that these brutal killings did not begin until 1922 with the McMahon murders being the first, if that is the case then what of the murders of Alexander McBride, William Kerr and Malachy Halfpenny the year before.

On the 12th of June 1921 three people were murdered in north Belfast. These murders were ordered by Nixon who took an active part in all of them. The following are the others who took part in these killings and some have not been named beforehand as they belonged to a separate unit of the 'Cromwell Club.'

District Inspector Nixon.
Head Constable Giff.
Constable Glass.
Constable Russell.
Constable Sterrit.
Constable Gordon.
Constable Caher.
Constable Hare.
Constable Norris.
Constable Reid.

Nixon ordered that the 'Curfew Patrol' Crossley was to report to him at 11.30 on the night of Saturday the 12th. The 'Curfew Patrol' was an armoured R.I.C. vehicle which drove around making sure that no one broke the curfew which was in force at the time. The driver of this vehicle was replaced by Constable Glass and Sergeant B. Clarke, who was in charge of the armoured car, was taken to Court Street Barracks in the Crumlin Road area and ordered by Nixon to remain there until his vehicle was returned. Nixon and Glass then drove on to the Crumlin Road itself and picked up the rest of their unit.

They then drove along Clifton Park Avenue on to the Cliftonville Road and then to Cardigan Drive. Once they reached here they banged on the door of number 28 and the

WILLIE KERR

door was opened by Mrs. McBride. Nixon then informed her that he wished her husband to come to the barracks for a few minutes and that he would be drove back home again. Mr. McBride was then taken out in his night clothes and placed in the tender and drove off, but instead of going to the barracks he was drove up to Ligoniel where he was brutally murdered. After this murder Nixon and his unit then drove to Herbert Street and to the home of Malachy Halfpenny. Constables Gordon and Sterrit burst in and dragged him from his bed and took him to the armoured car. Halfpenny was beat with rifle butts and Constable Giff pierced the victims feet with his bayonet. The vehicle then drove once again to Ligoniel and when it came to a stop Halfpenny was pulled from it and riddled with bullets. They then lifted the body and threw it through a barbed wire fence into the field where the body of McBride already lay. Before these killings the unit went to number 47 Old Lodge Road where they took William Kerr and murdered him in similar circumstances. When the bodies were discovered the next morning it was found that Halfpenny was shot seventeen times and apart from inflicting the stab wounds to Halfpenny's feet Giff also used his bayonet to rip out the victims testicles.

PROTESTANT SNIPER

These were not the only murders to occur that night. The I.R.A. shot dead Thomas Sturdy (who was an A-Special) in York Street and also a Protestant named Edward Jenkins in the Kashmir Road area. The B-Specials burst into the home of Patrick Milligan in Dock Lane and shot him dead. They then burst into the home of Joseph Millar in New Dock Street dragged him from it and murdered him. In this incident his mother was shot and wounded and later recovered. She was shot dead on the 24 of November 1921 by a Protestant sniper.

CATHOLIC MEMBER

Of the original 'Cromwell Club' two were killed. Sergeant C. Clarke was shot dead by members of the I.R.A. A remarkable fact was that Clarke was a Catholic and was buried in Milltown Cemetery close to some of his victims. The other was Sergeant Glover. The remainder continued their murderous onslaught against the Catholic community as did other R.I.C. and B-Special 'reprisal units', however as this unit was killing in ones and twos they were also planning a much more atrocious deed, the McMahon family killings. As already stated this attack occurred on the 24th of March 1922 and at this time the Belfast Corporation were carrying out work on Carlisle Circus which is a short distance away from the McMahon home. A watchman was placed on duty to watch over the work site and to ensure that nothing was stolen. At approximately 1.00am he was approached by two constables who asked him for a sledgehammer and after receiving it disappeared up the Crumlin Road. The two R.I.C. constables were Sterrit and Gordon and when they got the hammer they joined up with their unit and then committed the murders. After the McMahon killings Michael Collins called on James Craig to hold and inquiry but this was refused. After learning that an inquiry was turned down Nixon and Harrison continued to organise bigger and more atrocious 'hits.' At this time a pact was being reached by Michael Collins and James Craig but this failed. Many historians believe that this was the intention of Nixon and Harrison as they both saw it as a threat not only to 'Ulster' but to themselves.

THE CABINET CONNECTION

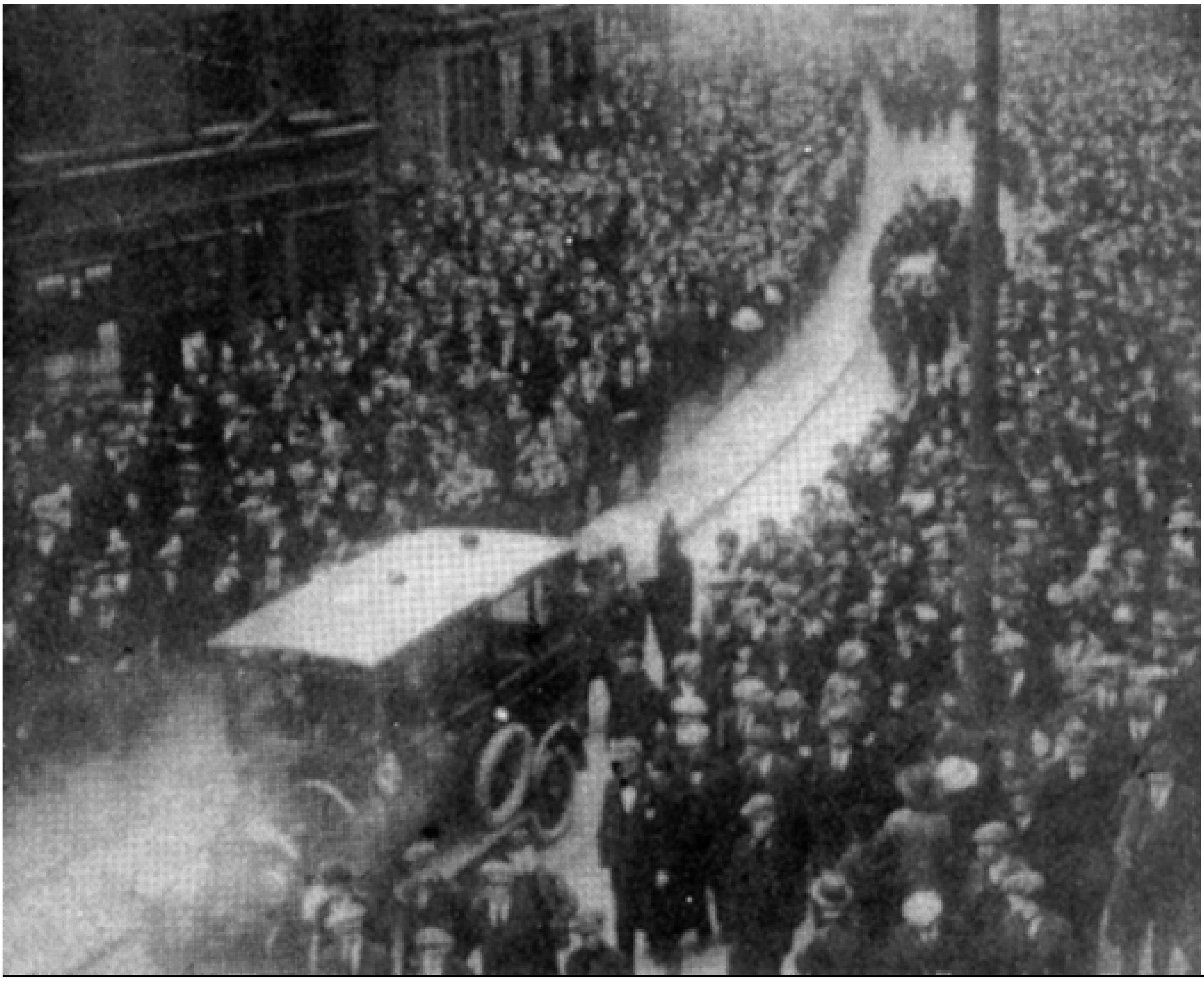
One of the main questions being asked at the time and which still remains unanswered to this day was why no inquiries were held and why there were no prosecutions when it was common knowledge who was committing the murders? It is believed that the reason the Government would not prosecute those involved is because the Northern Ireland Cabinet were themselves involved in the creation of the 'Cromwell Clubs.' The Cabinet was entirely made up of members of the Ulster Unionists and it was this party which set up the 'Cromwell Clubs' at their headquarters in the old Townhall at the rear of Musgrave R.I.C. barracks. Another point which must be made concerning these buildings is why were they connected? In other words why was the headquarters of a political party connected to a police station?

When they were established these units carried out numerous murders in full R.I.C. or B-Special uniform and many of them were personally known to many eyewitnesses who saw the killings being carried out. Apart from the McMahon murders and the Arnon Street massacre there was one inquiry which Craig would have found difficult to refuse (although he did) and this was an attack which occurred on the 23rd of April 1921. On this date two members of the Auxiliary Police, Ernest Bolim and John Bailes, were walking along Donegall Place when they were approached by members of the I.R.A. and shot dead. That night during curfew hours Nixon and Harrison, along with five other members of their unit, left the Springfield Road barracks to carry out an act of retaliation - the murder of the Duffin brothers.

THE DUFFIN BROTHER MURDERS

At 11.55pm several men approached the home of the Duffin family at 64 Clonard Gardens and banged on the front door. Inside two brothers, Patrick and Daniel, were sitting in the downstairs backroom when the banging began and Patrick went upstairs to ask another brother, John, what to do. Because he had heard a curfew patrol passing a few moments earlier John presumed that it was safe enough to do so and that it was maybe a police raid. Patrick came downstairs and as he was doing so instructed Daniel to open the door. When he did so a number of men burst in and shouted 'put you hands up' before forcing them back into the backroom. The men then opened fire with revolvers and the two brothers fell dead, the killers then rushed from the house slamming the door behind them. At this time John was coming downstairs to see what was going on when the men rushed past him, he then went into the room and saw the bodies. He noticed that there was a dog in the house howling to get out. He knew that it was not their dog and later stated that 'it was evidently brought in by them (the killers.) It was a yellow, long haired, well cared for dog and seemed to be no stray animal. It wanted out and was very anxious to get away. I kept it in the house. The District Inspector who called after I reported the matter took the dog away.' It was Nixon who called and collected the dog and the animal did not become part of the investigation. Many people who saw the dog being led away then identified it. It was the station dog of Springfield Road R.I.C. Barrack.

After the McMahon and Arnon Street massacres relations began to improve between the British and Irish Government and various negotiations took place. The R.I.C. were formed into a new force which was named the Royal Ulster Constabulary (R.U.C.) and the A, B, and C Specials remained. Nixon and Harrison retained their positions within the new force and Nixon was given control of the Shankill Road area where he was treated as a local folk hero, but unknown to Nixon plans were under way to remove him from the police force as he was becoming an embarrassment due to the fact that it was common knowledge that he organised and took part in various murder attacks. The new R.U.C. needed to rid itself of this extreme loyalist and for the time being was waiting to the excuse to do so.



ERECTED
BY
ALICE CLARKE,
IN FOND REMEMBRANCE OF
HER DEAR HUSBAND
SERGEANT C. CLARKE,
LATE R.I.C.
WHO WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED
ON THE 13TH MARCH 1922
AGED 41 YEARS.

BRUTAL BIOGRAPHIES

JOHN WILLIAM NIXON

John William Nixon was born in Co. Cavan in 1880. He joined the R.I.C. as a constable in 1899 and served in Belfast, Donegall, Lisburn and Galway. He was then posted to Belfast for a second time and stationed in the Springfield Road barracks where he received the rank of sergeant.

Soon after, and having passed the necessary examination, he was made a Head Constable and transferred to the Dublin R.I.C. depot in 1912 where he made himself prominent in connection with the "Larkin Strike" a year later. In 1916 he and District Inspector Redmond were in charge of the unit which moved against the I.R.A. in Mode Castle which was under the command of Liam Mellows. Later he served at Strokestown where his zeal earned the approval of Hammer Greenwood. He next figured in Westport after the death of District Inspector Milling. Subsequently transferred to Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh, where he became associated with Major Leathers, Intelligence Officer at Castlesaunderson, and was prominent in all the activities of the Auxiliaries in that area.
In November 1920 he returned to Belfast to take charge of C' Division of the R.I.C. based at Brown Square barracks. It was from this period that he began to organise murder squads to kill Catholics. In 1922 he was given control of the Loyalist Shankill Road area after he maintained his position as District Inspector within the newly formed R.U.C.

DISTRICT INSPECTOR NIXON

BLACK BOOK

After the R.U.C.'s formation County Inspector Harrison was expected to be appointed City Commissioner in place of John Fitzhugh Gelston. Nixon was then expecting to be appointed County Inspector in place of Harrison. Gelston was disgusted with the state in which the new police force was falling and consulted Major General Flood (who became Inspector General) and afterwards it was decided that Nixon, Harrison and the rest of their murder squads would have to go. All were asked to resign from the R.U.C. and all refused. What Gelston and Flood had underestimated was the power Nixon and Harrison had. Both threatened that if they were dispensed with they would shoot certain members of the Northern Ireland Government and they had the entire force of the 'Specials' supporting them. After the 'resign' attempt failed Nixon was offered an appointment in the Canadian Police but he also refused this offer. In Belfast Nixon had too much power and control over the police and Government and it centred mainly around a note pad which he called 'the black book.' This was a small pocket book which Nixon had kept listing all the R.I.C. members who carried out sectarian murders against Catholics and the officers who ordered them to to carried out. It also listed members of the Cabinet who, he stated, set up the murder squads.

SERVICE AWARDED

He was permitted to remain within the police and the promise of a future honour was made to him. This took the form of an M.B.E. which was awarded to him in 1923 by King George for his 'valuable service rendered by him during the troubled period.' Harrison was awarded an O.B.E. in the birthday honours the same year.
The remainder of the Nixon/Harrison 'Cromwell Club' all remained in the R.U.C. and all received higher promotions. Harrison received the post of City Commissioner which he sought and was later appointed Inspector General. Nixon now realised that his future within the R.U.C. was insecure due to the fact that he remained un-promoted, and he also knew that he was under a permanent I.R.A. death threat as they were constantly gathering information on him mainly concerning his movements. A Free State Ministry of Defence report compiled in 1924 described him as 'an arrant coward who never ventures abroad.' The Ministry realised that because of the agreements made between the two governments Nixon was safe so long as he remained within Northern Ireland, however their main plan was to have him assassinated once he left it. The same report also mentioned that Nixon had 'parliamentary ambitions.' The report was correct as Nixon's political career began a short time afterwards.

NOT AN INCH
THE NEW "NO SURRENDER CANDIDATE"

In 1923 Nixon and a number of other R.I.C./R.U.C. members founded the 'Sir Robert Peel Memorial Orange Lodge' which was based in Clifton Street Orange Hall. In 1924, at the Lodge's second annual general meeting Nixon made a speech based on the border issue which was being resolved at the time by both Irish Governments.

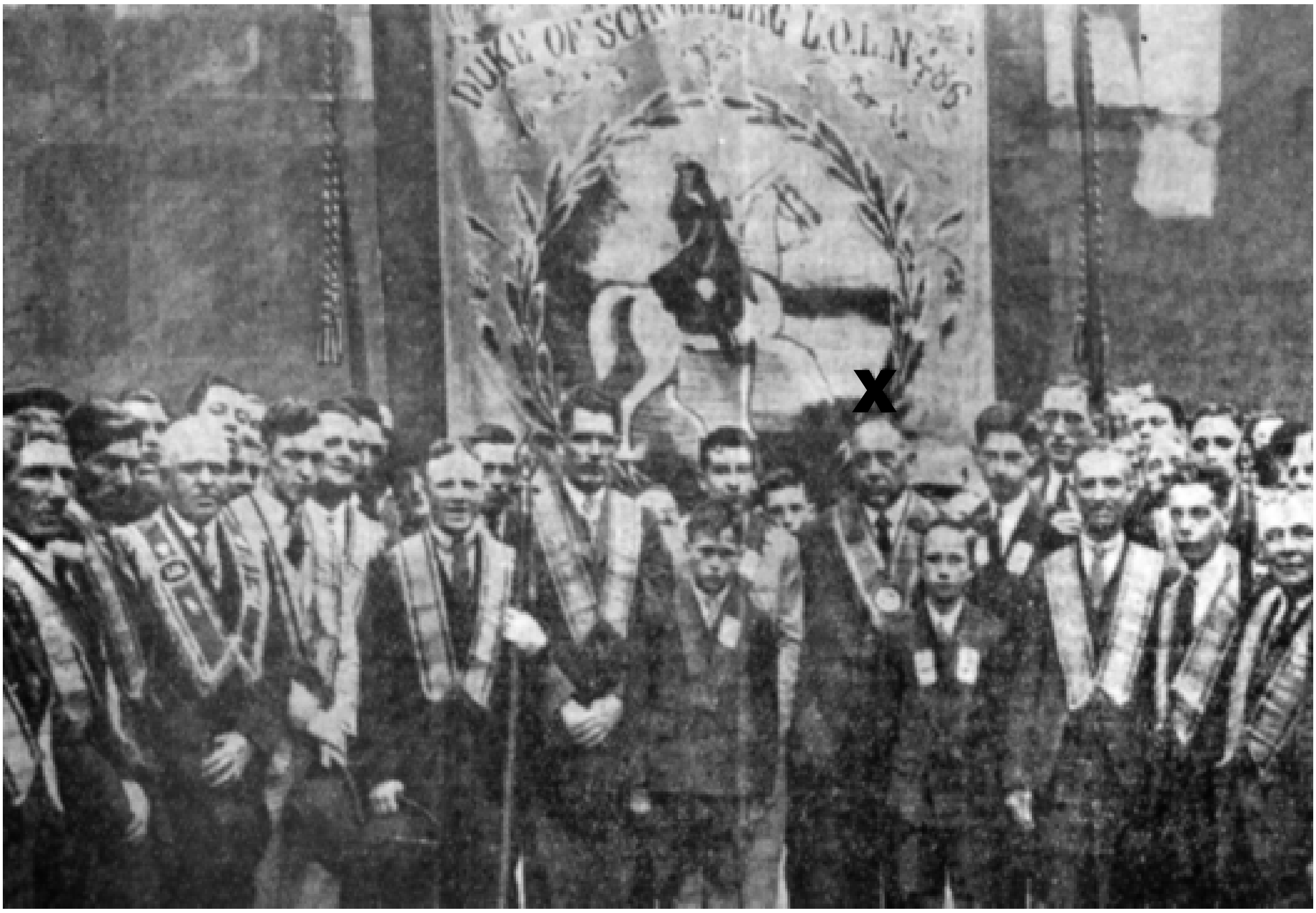
The speech was based on allegations that the I.R.A. were going to invade 'Ulster' and claim a large section of it and that it was up to Orangemen to prevent it. He then stated that 'not an inch' of 'Ulster' would be handed over to the 'enemy.' The speech was published in the local newspapers and caused widespread controversy and Nixon was soon reported to his superiors who went on to hold an inquiry. In the meantime District Inspector Nixon was suspended, his superiors no longer fearing his 'black book' as they felt they had silenced the rest of his murder squad through promotions.

WIDE SUPPORT

Nixon then went out and gathered widespread support throughout the Shankill area. Thousands of bill posters were pasted up in support for him and the entire gable wall of the Brown Square barracks was covered in them. The night before the inquiry a crowd of over 10,000, which included many members of the R.U.C. and 'Specials' and which was led by numerous Orange Order bands marched from the Shankill Road to Belfast's City Hall to hear speeches in support of Nixon. The following day (14 February 1924) the proceedings against Nixon began but were twice adjourned. The inquiry was finally held on the 19th of February with County Inspector F. Britten, of Lisburn, and County Inspector W. Moore, of Armagh proceeding. The case against Nixon was based on the reports which appeared in the newspapers and the three journalists who wrote them refused to give evidence as they had received threats from supporters of Nixon. The court was then dissolved and all proceedings against the District Inspector dropped. Celebrations among Nixon's supporters then began.

DISMISSED

Nixon then reported back on duty and a few days later he was given an hours notice to report to the Inspector General's office. When he reported he found Inspector General Wickham and City Commissioner Gelston waiting to interview him and Wickham informed him that he had orders from the Northern Ireland Government to query him and that he was to answer just yes and no to the questions put to him. Nixon protested strongly throughout the interview and when it finished stormed out of the room. It remains unknown exactly what these questions were but they are believed to have centred around the murder squads. On the 28th of February District Inspector Nixon was dismissed from the R.U.C. on a full pension.



NIXON (BELOW 'X') WITH MEMBERS OF THE ORANGE ORDER
AT CLIFTON STREET ORANGE HALL. JULY 1937

PROTESTS

Numerous protests were again organised in support of Nixon and various Government Minister received death threats. Again he was supported by a large section of the R.U.C. and 'Specials' and the night after his dismissal the entire 'B' force in Co. Tyrone refused to go on duty. He also had the support of the Orange and Black Orders, the Shankill Unionist Association as well as the Loyalist Defence Association who all made threats to oppose the government in the next elections. A large number of M.P.'s supported Nixon and one of them, Sam McGuffin (Ulster Unionist Labour Association) offered to resign his seat to allow Nixon to stand in the following by-election. The others made demands in parliament that he should be reinstated and described his dismissal as an attack on the Orange Order. On the 15th of April a large meeting was held in the Ulster Hall and when Nixon got on to the platform to speak he was given a standing ovation from the large crowd which included members of the R.U.C. 'Specials' the Orange and Masonic Lodge's and numerous Protestant clergy (five of whom were speakers.) In July the same year support for the ex-District Inspector was displayed on various orange arches throughout the Shankill area and in the same area he had a loyalist band named in honour of him.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The government stood firm knowing of the British and Irish interest in the whole case and Nixon was never reinstated. The following year Nixon stood in a council election in the Court Ward of Belfast and which was the Old Lodge Road area. He was elected by 3. 761 votes to 1. 868 for a Labour candidate who opposed him. He remained in this council seat for a number of years afterwards but his main political career did not begin until 1929 when he stood in the parliamentary election for the Woodvale area standing as an Independent Unionist. The turnout for this election was 75.2% of which 58.4% voted for Nixon thus outvoting the Unionist candidate Mr. W. Beattie.

Nixon's next election was in 1933 when he defended his seat against Mr. A. Dalzell who was standing on behalf of the Unionist Party. At this election the turnout was 76.4% with Nixon clinching 56.6% of the vote and Dalzell receiving 41%. Throughout these elections another loyalist figure joined with Nixon and stood in elections under the Independent Unionist banner.

FRIENDS

William Wilton was a prosperous undertaker who was well known for his extreme loyalist views. In Belfast Wilton had funeral parlours on the Crumlin Road, (which remains today) the Shankill Road and a large number of others spread throughout the city and all of which he permitted to be used for various loyalist meetings. Both Nixon and Wilton were staunch supporters of the new 'Ulster Protestant League.' This organisation was founded in 1931 and its main purpose was to call on Protestants not to employ or do business with Roman Catholics. This group also had connections with a similar group named the 'Ulster Protestant Association and the main object of this group was quite simply the killing of Catholics. The Ulster Protestant League began to lose support in the times leading up to the outdoor relief protests of the 1930s and soon disbanded. The organisation then emerged again in the 1950s and its name changed to 'Ulster Protestant Action' with the aims of the previous group remaining. Like the first the grouping lasted a short time but among its members who continued careers as militant loyalists were Noel Doherty who was active in the paramilitary 'Protestant Volunteers' and Gusty Spence who was one of the founders of the revived 'Ulster Volunteer Force.' Another person who dominated the 'Ulster Protestant League' and who was a personal friend of both Nixon and Wilton was the Rev. Ian Paisley. Paisley was a fascinated follower of unionist politics in Northern Ireland and at least once a week, mainly Tuesdays, Nixon would drive him up to Stormont. Paisley later described Nixon as "the most effective politician of his day."

Nixon's next election was in 1938 and this time he was defending his seat against the Unionist candidate Mr. J. E. Dickson. In this election he was proposed by John Johnston of 39 Brookmount Street and was seconded by Albert Beattie of 165 Canmore Street. His assentors were the following;

Thomas Harvey. 66 Carlow Street.
Joseph Bingham. 51 Sugarfield Street.
William J. Campbell. 148 Canmore Street.
David Mc Callin. 25 Ninth Street.
Thomas Lynn. 48 Ninth Street.
William H. Adams. 38 North Howard Street.
Robert Burke. 3 Kendal Street.
James Hamilton. 171 Urney Street.

The election turnout was 95.5% with 59% voting for Nixon who once again defeated the Unionist who received 41% of the votes.

COWARD

The next election was after the Second World War in 1945. The candidate chosen by the Unionist Party to oppose him was Mr. Samuel Megraw who lived at 4 Hillsbrough Parade. Megraw worked as a boilermaker in the Belfast shipyard and was a member of the 'Ulster Unionist Labour Association,' and because of this the Unionists believed that he could relate to the working people of the Woodvale. Nixon's proposer in this election was Thomas Meekin who in turn was seconded by Annie M. Yeats, the election agent being James Shannon who lived at 147 Ballygomartin Road. This was to be Nixon's hardest fought election and during it Nixon was accused of being "a coward who had run away during the Luftwaffe blitz on Belfast." Nixon denied the allegations and stated that he had gone as far as loaning his house to the civil authorities during the course of the

war. If this is true then one question which remains unanswered in connection with this is where was Nixon when his house was on loan? The Ulster Prime Minister Sir Basil Brooke showed a personal interest in this election contest and at a rally in support of Megraw he stated that "Nixon had an opportunity of joining the Unionist Party and that he was quite unable to realise why he should have decided to continue or remain an Independent Unionist." He then went on to state his 'regret' that Nixon choose not to join his party. The turnout in this election was 69.3% with Nixon receiving 66.4% of the overall vote. After this election Nixon's health began to decline.

The next election was in 1949 and this was to be Nixon's last. This time his proposer was Wilton (the undertaker) of 227 Ballygomartin Road and who himself stood for the seat in Clifton Ward. He was seconded by Margaret Meekin who lived at 83 Hopeton Street in the Shankill Road area. At this election the Unionist Party realised that there was too much support for Nixon in this area and that his seat was unshakable. Nixon stood unopposed.

DEATH OF NIXON

Soon afterwards Nixon's health began to get worse and he was moved to the Musgrave Clinic where he died on the eleventh of May 1949 at the age of 71.

Nixon' s funeral was on Friday 13th of May to Dundonald Cemetery in East Belfast. Thousands attended and large crowds lined the route of the funeral. Included among those in attendance was the Speaker of the Northern Ireland House of Commons Sir Norman Stronge; the Minister of Education Lieut - Colonel S. H. Hall Thompson; the Minister of Health and many other Stormont Ministers. Many members of various Orange and Masonic Lodges were also present as were numerous clergy men. The officiating clergy were the Rev. Hastings Lyttle, M. A., the Rev. R. Craig and Chancellor James Quinn. The Prime Minister was represented by Sir Robert Gransden, Secretary to the Cabinet, the Minister of Home Affairs by Mr. W. Wellwood and the parliamentary staff by Mr. Alexander Clarke. The funeral made its way slowly down the Shankill Road before being drove to Dundonald were Nixon was buried in the family plot.

An election was held in 1950 for Nixon's seat and four politicians stood against each other for it. The turnout was 57.9% and the following is its result;

Mr. R. J. R. Harcourt (Unionist) 40.1%
Mr. R. Hill (Ind. Unionist) 29.7%
Mr. C. Hull (N. Ireland Labour Party) 24.3%
Mr. D. H. Walker (Ind. Unionist) 12.9%

The Unionist Party won the seat which they had fought long and hard for but it was only because the Independent Unionist vote was split. The Unionist Part continued to hold the seat except for two elections when the seat was won by Mr. W. R. Boyd of the Northern Ireland Labour Party in 1958 and 1962.

COUNTY INSPECTOR HARRISON

Richard Dale Winnett Harrison was born in Kilkenny in 1883, his father being a district inspector in the local R.I.C. After his education in Trinity College, Dublin, he followed in his fathers footsteps and joined the R.I.C in 1906 and became a third class district inspector the same year. After serving in many parts of Ireland he became an officer in charge of the Detective Office in Belfast. Harrison soon after teamed up with Nixon and their reign of terror throughout the Catholic communities of Belfast began. At the formation of the R.U.C. Harrison seems to have disowned Nixon with the promise of promotion which was soon granted when he was appointed City Commissioner. He died at his Upper Malone Road home on the 22nd April 1982 at the age of 99.

Most of the victims of the Harrison/Nixon murder squads lie in Milltown Cemetery and unfortunately most of them lie in unmarked graves. Those grave which are marked must remain a constant memory and be used so that this dreadful period in our history is never forgotten.

COUNTY INSPECTOR HARRISON

THE OUTDOOR RELIEF RIOTS OCTOBER 1932

After the dreadful conflict of the early 1920's Belfast was to turn very much to normal. This 'uneasy peace' remained until the 1930's when conflict was to break out again. This time the battle was slightly different.

In a city steeped in a legacy of sectarian conflict, one dramatic moment in Belfast's history saw a political landmark when in 1932 the working class of both communities came together in a struggle to raise the relief rates set out by the state.

The climax of this successful struggle came in October 1932 in what became known as 'The Outdoor Relief Riots.' However, despite the unity on the ground, the sectarian nature of the state ensured that while the RUC was told by Dawson Bates to use batons in Protestant areas purportedly to stop looting of shops by trouble makers, firearms were directed against the Catholic protesters.

The worst of the rioting occurred over the 48 hour period of Tuesday 11th and Wednesday 12th October 1932, in the working class areas of East, West and North Belfast. As barricades were thrown up amid the terrace streets, the RUC moved on these areas in large numbers heavily armed and backed up with armoured cars in an attempt to take control of the major thoroughfares.

SHOT DEAD

The two day mayhem resulted in two Catholics being shot dead, and fifteen others wounded. Nineteen other people, sixteen of whom were Protestants, were recorded as having suffered injuries. Seventeen Belfast Councillers, including ten Unionists were so alarmed by the rioting that they signed a motion for debate in the City Council calling on the Stormont Government "promptly to take such action as may be necessary to relieve distress and starvation amongst the unemployed people of the city.' The Government, clearly shaken by events instructed the Board of Guardians, whose responsibility it was to set the scale rate, to increase payments and family allowances. But as the unemployed rejoiced, the burials of the two men killed were underway.

LEESON STREET AFTER THE RIOTS

REVOLVER FIRING

On Friday October 14th, 1932, the funerals of John Keegan of Leeson Street and Samuel Baxter of Regent Street proceeded to Milltown as tens of thousands marched to the cemetery. The R.U.C. denied they were responsible for shooting the men saying their men had fired into the air to disperse a crowd when in imminent danger of being killed. An R.U.C. Sergeant in charge of a party of 8 men said: *As they advanced down Leeson Street, the mob increased to nine or ten hundred persons, who continued to shower stones, while some of their number opened fire with revolvers.* The R.U.C. took shelter in doorways, and as a last resort the R.U.C. Sergeant ordered his men to fire their revolvers in the air, as they were in imminent danger of being killed. "The mob scattered, but stone throwing was kept up, and there were occasional bursts of revolver firing by the rioters," he went on to say.

The Coroner remarked that *The moral responsibility for the two deaths lay with those who had advised the men to defy the proclamation.* He concluded: *That both men died as a result of bullet wounds, stating that there was insufficient evidence to show by whom the shots were fired.* He added that there was nothing to show that "either of the men had been participating in the riots."

ARRESTED AT FUNERAL

Watched by armed R.U.C. men who lined the route. John Keegan was the first of the two men to be buried with Samuel Baxter's funeral later in the afternoon. His coffin was led by Tom Mann, leader of the National Unemployed Workers Movement, as armoured cars accompanied the cortege amid the thousands who packed the Falls Road.

At the gates of Milltown Cemetery Tom Mann was arrested, apparently because of his communist affiliations, and taken to a nearby R.U.C. barrack. Tom Mann himself described what happened:-

I arrived in Belfast at 6.30am on Friday morning, October 14th, and my first surprise was to see 500 soldiers disembarking and lining up for marching. I had the attention of the 'tecs from the first jump off the boat; they didn't interfere with me in any way during the morning beyond that of following me wherever I went. I joined in the great funeral procession of Comrade Baxter in the afternoon, the other comrade having been buried during the morning. I was by the coffin the whole two and a half hours - the time it took to march through the city, whilst hundreds of thousands lined the sidewalks to the gates of the cemetery. Whilst the funeral ceremony was on, I turned away from the general body to proceed to an important meeting to discuss the arrangements for a big demonstration later in the evening. With the vast crowd unaware of what was happening, I reached the gates

UNEMPLOYED CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS MARCH TO THE GATES OF THE UNION WORKHOUSE ON THE LISBURN ROAD

of the cemetery; a police detective touched me on the shoulder and said sharply, "You'll come along with us Mr Mann." I said 'What are you the police? "Yes, the police station is only two minutes away. You'll accompany us there and learn what is wanted."

On arrival at the police station I was informed that I must go at once to police headquarters and that a conveyance was waiting to take me. This conveyance turned out to be an armoured car covered by a bird cage arrangement. Suffice it to say, this was packed with police, with their revolvers handy and only just enough room left for me. A police headquarters I was told by the Chief Superintendent that he was responsible for my arrest and that deportation would follow. He asked 'was it your intention to hold public meetings?' I said it certainly was, and that I was intending to hold a meeting at the Custom House steps on Sunday night. He then said that would be impossible as they could not allow such a gathering. A long talk ensured, but it finished by my being handed an expulsion order to be operated forthwith. This was at 5.30pm and at 8.30 the same evening I was taken in a car to the boat which left at 9.15.

POLITICAL RIGHTS

The Outdoor Relief riots in Belfast were inevitable because of the Poor Law Guardians rigid attitude towards the poor of the city and because of the Stormont Government's failure to protect the political rights of its parliamentary opposition.

Hardships created by harsh economic laws were imposed by a so-called democratic government that confined its ideas of democracy to the majority of votes recorded without regard to other democratic essentials.

Considerable changes had taken place in the administration of Outdoor Relief in the wake of the riots of 1932. Unionists in Belfast were taken by surprise that rioting against their own institutions could take place with the participation of their own working class supporters. The blame was placed almost entirely on the Poor Law Guardians because of their failure to respond to the Government's suggestions to treat the poor more humanely and to stretch out with their relief facilities to the supporters of the Government amongst the city's destitute.

SECTARIAN RIOTS

By 1935, the Unionist Part had recovered its position in the working class areas, and was again able to influence events in ways that suited their strategy. Sectarian riots returned to inner Belfast and before they were finished, 430 Catholic homes had been burned, and 514 Catholic families (2,241 people) intimidated out of their homes in Protestant areas. Hundreds of people suffered gunshot wounds or injuries and thirteen people were killed.

SHORT LIVED

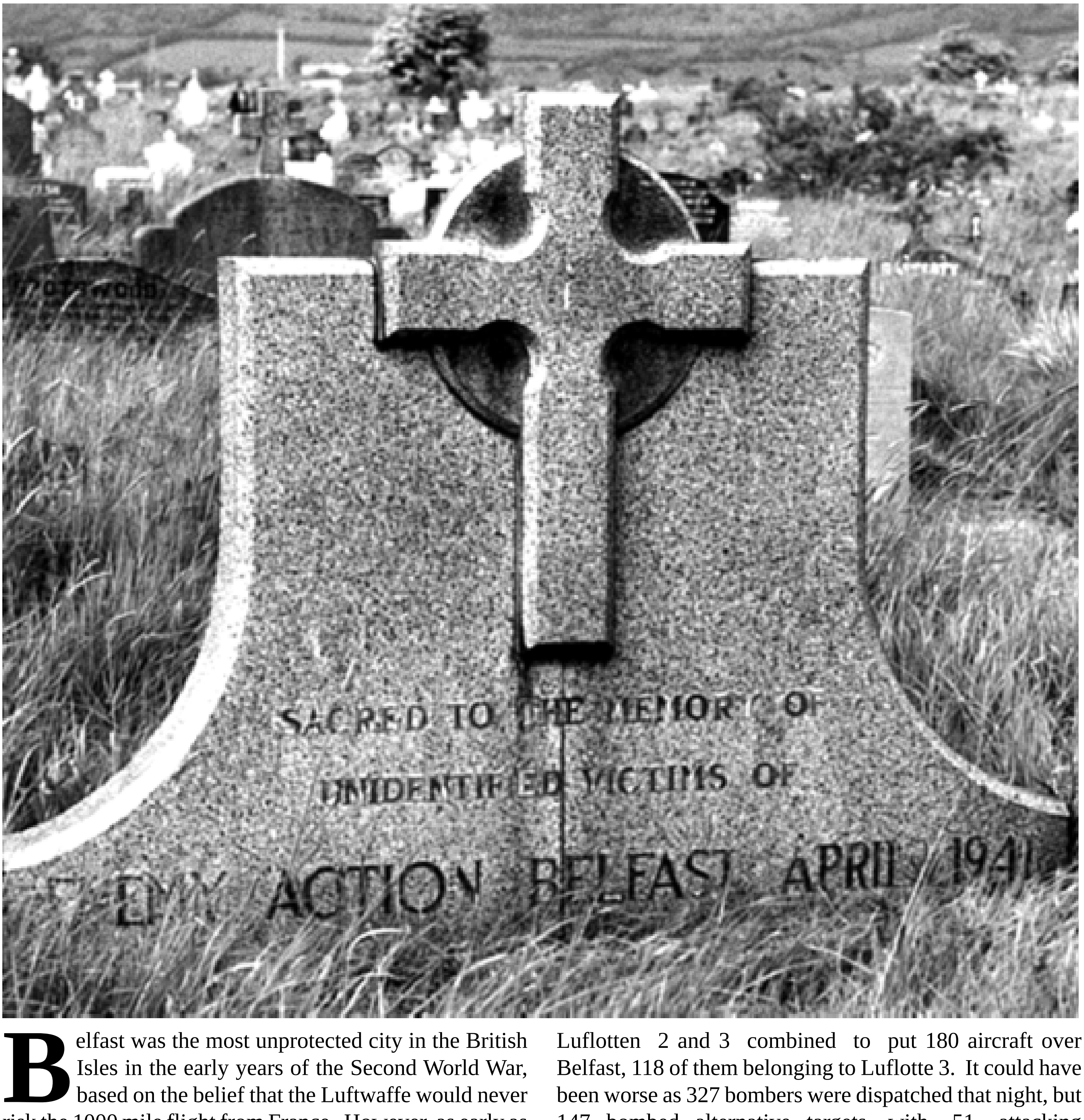
The partnership of working class standing against the state was short lived, it had been spurred by a common cause of economic hardship and poverty brought to an end by the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939.

BATTLEFIELDS OF SPAIN

It was left to the hardened minority of young socialists from both communities to carry on their struggle, a stand which they took to the battlefields of Spain to fight against General Franco. Men such as Liam Tumilson and Jim Straney from Ballymacarrett, Dick O'Neill and Willie Loughran from the Falls, Bill Beattie and Bill Henry, one from the Shankill, the other from the Old Lodge Road.

VICTIMS OF THE SWASTIKA

Today most people who visit Milltown completely ignore or just give a passing glance to the 'Blitz Grave' in Milltown Cemetery. Most people don't understand what it is as most of the time its inscription, which is along the bottom of the memorial, is covered by overgrown grass. But this grave marks the graves of those unidentified victims of the German Luftwaffe who bombed Belfast without mercy in Easter 1941.



Belfast was the most unprotected city in the British Isles in the early years of the Second World War, based on the belief that the Luftwaffe would never risk the 1000 mile flight from France. However, as early as December 1940, the Germans had flown reconnaissance sorties over Belfast, taking photographs of Harland & Wolff, and when a short sharp raid on the night of the 7th - 8th April 1941 (during which Squadron Leader Simpson flying a Hurricane of No. 245 Squadron based at Aldergrove brought down a He111 down over Dundrum Bay) it was too late to rectify a situation which was to leave Belfast open on Easter Tuesday, April 15th, 1941. On that night Luflotten 2 and 3 combined to put 180 aircraft over Belfast, 118 of them belonging to Luflotte 3. It could have been worse as 327 bombers were dispatched that night, but 147 bombed alternative targets, with 51 attacking Liverpool. Most of the aircraft that failed to reach Belfast diverted due to weather conditions as from 11.00pm the cloud was thick, but it cleared later in the night, giving late arrivals a clear bombing run. The air raid sirens sounded over Belfast at 10.40pm and the Luftwaffe had plenty of targets to get through. The shipyard, Shorts, various mills, Victoria Barracks and the nearby Antrim Road Waterworks. Many people still believe that the Waterworks was

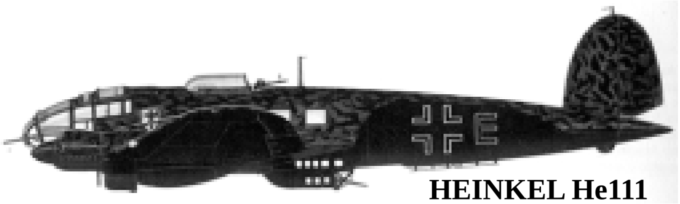
mistaken for the docks but nothing could be further from the truth. Their intention was to destroy the water supply for their next raid which was to be almost exclusively fire bombs. No water supply no water to put the fores out.

The Blitz was a dreadful experience for the people of Belfast. Hundreds of high explosive bombs falling out of the sky and no one knowing where the next one was going to hit. When the Luftwaffe was finished Belfast was devastated. Hundreds lay dead, countless more were injured and many parts of Belfast were in flames. Large sections of the city centre were destroyed. York Street Mill was burning out of control and at one stage a massive gable wall fell on the crammed streets below it killing all those who believed they were safe in their own homes. The first priority was to put all the fires out and this was done with the assistance of fire crews from the Irish Free State. Next was the rescue operations and many dreadful stories are recollected in connection with this unenvious task. Jimmy Doherty was an Air Raid Warden at the time. He explains one of his experiences when the Germans had left:-

We left the Irish firemen on the Shankill Road and went down Percy Street, the scene of the greatest disaster of the raid. A shelter had suffered a direct hit and almost 70 people were killed when it collapsed. I knew many of those who died. When I was serving my apprenticeship in that area, I had walked up Percy Street every evening. One of the women standing close by remembered me and recalled my friendship with a young girl who lived in the street. She was very pretty and she often waited for me as I came out

VICTORIA BARRACKS WAS ALMOST OBLITERATED A FACT WHICH IS OFFICIALLY DENIED TO THIS VERY DAY

THE GERMAN PLANES OVER BELFAST



HEINKEL He111

JUNKERS Ju88

of the workshop. The older boys chaffed me about this but, as I have said, she was very pretty and I was proud that she had singled me out from the other boys. She was in the shelter when the bomb hit it. I swallowed hard and held back a tear. My memory went back to those days and my first day at work. But we had to push on, so I wished the old woman goodbye and we continued down the debris strewn street towards the Falls Road.

We were getting nearer to the baths and the long, grim, heartbreaking experiences that will never be forgotten. It was about 8.00am when we arrived. We expected a similar scene to that of the Mater Hospital where relatives were milling around searching for news of families or friends. This morning, however, there were no crowds and comparatively few people. On our way in, the first shock of the morning was the sight of a burned hand lying in the doorway, but there was more to come. We had volunteered but we were totally unprepared for the real horror that was to follow. Hundreds of bodies brought in from scattered incidents were lying all around us. They were men and women, young people, children and infants. How could anyone have visualised seeing so many broken bodies in one place?

The all clear was not sounded until 5.00 am the following morning and the Luftwaffe left a mass of death and destruction behind them. Belfast was burning and 745 people lay dead, 1,500 injured and 28,000 buildings destroyed or damaged. As Jimmy's account shows bodies were laid out in the empty pools of the Falls Baths which were used as a temporary morgue. It was a truly gruesome sight. At St. George's Market there were 200 bodies laid out. Most were eventually identified but unfortunately there were many unidentified bodies buried in mass graves in Milltown Cemetery and the City Cemetery. Holy relics were used to identify Catholic victims and it is these who lie buried in Milltown but the reality is the carnage suffered by these innocent people prevented, in many cases, proper religious identification. Such an act in war is irrelevant and all these people are buried in consecrated ground whether in Milltown or the City. After all, religious segregation was the last thing on these people's minds when so many bombs were falling out of the Belfast sky.

BROKEN WINGS ON BRANDON

How Five Polish Airmen Came To Be Buried in Milltown

Walking through Milltown Cemetery amid the sprawling lines of graves, one may be surprised to see a row of five Polish graves, the dark headstones illustrating no gloss or glamour, their only embroilment being the distinctive Polish eagle, a name and 303 Squadron.
How these five Polish airmen came to rest in West Belfast, is a story that stretches from Warsaw, to Cornwall, from Kerry to Belfast.

The German invasion of Poland in September 1939, was the spark that ignited the greatest conflict in the history of mankind - the Second World War. The Poles, though gallant in their resistance, were no match for the modern mechanised German war machine and their 'Blitzkrieg' tactics.

PACT

Under equipped, and sandwiched between Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, Poland was quickly swallowed up. It also found itself the victim of a deceptive Nazi-Soviet pact. Hitler had always aimed as his ultimate goal, the destruction of the Soviet Union, but at this early stage not knowing how quickly France would fall, and Britain would need to evacuate from France, he couldn't afford to fight on two fronts, so a pact with Russia seemed, for the time being, appropriate. Stalin also favoured the pact; knowing Hitler's true intentions he needed time to rebuild his army especially his officer corps which had been the victim of his own purges.

ESCAPED

These historic events sealed Poland's fate. The remnants of the Polish army, encircled by the Germans, surrendered by the end of September. Thousands were taken prisoner, but thousands more escaped to France and later to England.

SOVIET INVASION

On the 17th of September, 1939, Soviet Russia, with troops and political commissaries, invaded the large areas of undefended eastern Poland assigned to it under the Nazi-Soviet pact. Stalin had no love of Poland and its anti-communist feeling, and while Hitler set about turning Poland into a reservoir of cheap labour of Nazi military requirement, Stalin set about murdering thousands of Polish officers in secret. (In April 1943, German Intelligence Officers discovered mass graves in Katyn Forest near Smolensk, containing the bodies of thousands of Polish officers in uniform.) However, what neither the German's or the Russian's could not do was kill the human spirit that flourished in Poland. While one division began to make route for the Middle East to join the British Army, many thousands more formed up in Britain as the Free Polish Brigade within the British Army. Other remained at home building a secret army of resistance.

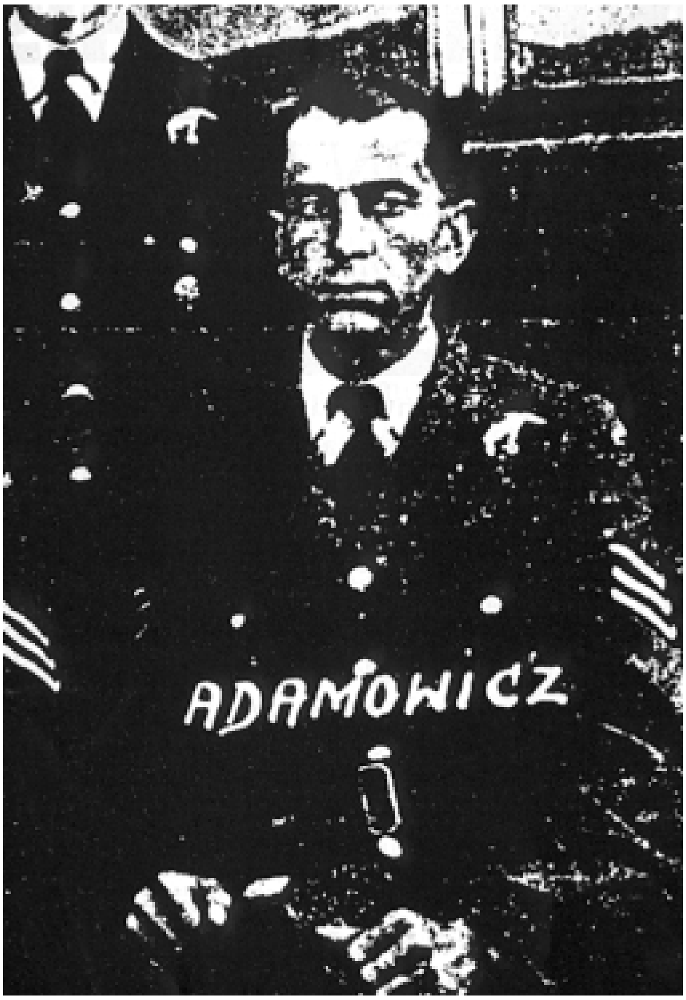
PILOT INSTRUCTOR

Many flyers also escaped to Britain, and whilst some found fame during the Battle of Britain, others were eventually formed into a few squadrons within RAF bomber and Coastal Commands. One such man was Flight Sergeant Klemens Adamowitz, an experienced pilot who had before the war trained as a pupil at the Pilots Training School in Bydgoszez, north-west of Warsaw, and later became a pilot instructor in the 4th Air Force Regiment at Torun in Poland. In December 1943, Klemens Adamowicz was flying Wellington bombers with No. 304 (Polish) Squadron, RAF Coastal Command

ELDEST MEMBER

Born on the 25th of April, 1911, at the ripe 'old' age of thirty two, he was the eldest member of the crew of six of the Wellington HF208. The other members of the crew were the co-pilot Sergeant Stanislaw Czerniowski, the navigator Sergeant Hirsz Pawel Kuflik, the wireless operator Sergeant Paeel Kowalewicz and the two air gunners, Sergeant Wincenty Pietrzak and Sergeant Hirsz Kuflik, the aircrafts navigator was Jewish of German descent. Born in Cologne on the 4th of January 1923, he

THE POLES, THOUGH GALLANT IN THEIR RESISTANCE, WERE NO MATCH FOR THE MODERN MECHANISED GERMAN WAR MACHINE AND THEIR 'BLITZKRIEG' TACTICS.



ABOVE - FLIGHT SERGEANT KLEMENS ADAMOWITZ.
BELOW - HIS GRAVE IN MILLTOWN

was brought up in Poland from where, with so many others, he fled before the invasion, later joining the Polish Forces in Britain.

U-BOAT THREAT

RAF Coastal Command, of which No. 304 Squadron was part, was fighting the most crucial campaign of the Second World War - the war against the U-Boats and the protection of the sea lanes through which convoys carried the vital war supplies from the United States and the British Commonwealth to Britain, and in turn, troops and supplies moved from Britain to Gibraltar and the Middle East. By 1943 German U-Boats in the North Atlantic were increasingly becoming causalities to British convoy tactics, in May 1943 alone, 41 U-Boats were sunk. It was a situation where the scale of losses, not matched by compensating successes, was becoming unacceptable to U-Boat command. However the U-Boat threat continued.

LOSSES

In December 1943, 304 Squadron was based in Predannack in Cornwall. They shared the base with several detachments of Mosquito and Beaufighters Squadrons whose job it was to counter increased German fighter activity over the Bay of Biscay, in which Coastal Command had concentrated its efforts attacking U-Boats leaving their French bases. 304 Squadron had moved to Predannack from Davidstow Moor in Wales from where during the summer months of fighting over the Bay the squadron lost five aircraft and twenty men.

MALFUNCTION

The squadron was equipped with Wellington MK XII aircraft which carried the Leigh Light enabling it to illuminate U-Boats on the surface at night. The original trials for this light had been carried out at RAF Limavady in 1941. The searchlight was mounted in a swivel ring to allow it at least 20% downwards or sidewards movement. By the end of the war Leigh Light fitted aircraft had made 218 attacks on U-Boats, 206 on ships and 27 U-Boats had been sunk. The Germans hated it calling it *Verdamnte Licht.* The Wellington bomber itself was constructed of geodetic engineering designed by the legendary Barnes Wallis renowned for the ‘Bouncing Bomb’ and the famous RAF dam raids of 1943. The Wellington was a very versatile aircraft, it could take a lot of flak and still manage to get back home. However, any aircraft is venerable were winter conditions, and mountainous terrain are concerned. When Flight Sergeant Adamowicz and his crew took off at dawn from their base at Predannack, it was a bitterly cold day. The aircraft would be involved in sweeps across the Bay of Biscay, it was a normal operation being carried out by aircraft of Coastal Command on a daily basis. Later that afternoon a request by Flight Sergeant Adamowicz to return to base was received at the Predannack operations room. This request for an early return was based on a malfunction of radio location equipment, and they were having difficulty getting a fix.

OTHER CRASHES

What happened after that no one knows except that, probably as a result of poor visibility, the aircraft crashed into Arraglen on Mount Brandon, Co. Kerry killing all six on board. The area had already witnessed two other crashes in previous months. In July a BOAC Sunderland crashed slightly west of where the Wellington impacted, at Slieveglass; a month later an RAF Sunderland based at the Castle Archdale flying boat base in Co. Fermanagh, crashed very close to were the Wellington had now gone down.

ROSARY BEADS

The alarm was raised by a local man, Michael Brick, who contacted the Irish Army HQ at Tralee. Whilst they were en route to the crash area, a local Garda officer from Cloughan village at the foot of Brandon, together with a few members of the Local Defence Force proceeded to the crash site. With them was a Red Cross party from Dingle. Working in extreme cold and dark conditions, the tangled wreckage of the aircraft and the bodies of its crew were located on the mountain. What had been in the minds of these men before they died no one knows, we can just surmise. Priority would have been the job at hand, the Poles had a fervent hatred of the enemy, survival certainly is always a factor. Christmas may also have been in their minds, the Poles were devout Catholics, a poignant reminder of that being a pair of rosary beads found on one of the dead airmen.

BURIALS

They may have been looking towards the new year of 1944 with much hope, Germany's defeat was certain, it was a matter of time before the Allies invaded Europe. What we can be sure of, is that Poland would always be on their mind. Unfortunately these six Poles would never return home, they had met their untimely end on a bleak mountain, a long way from Poland but in equally Catholic Ireland.

The bodies of the six Poles were handed over to the British by an Irish guard of honour at Middletown on the Monaghan/Armagh border, were they proceeded to Belfast for burial. All but Sergeant Hirsz Kuflik were buried at Milltown, he was buried in the Jewish Cemetery at Carnmoney.

Today at the crash site a portion of Geodetic framework lies lodged in a gully on the mountain, close by a turret ring. The crashes on Mount Brandon are now well embedded into local folk lore. A plaque in Cloughan commemorates all the crashes in the area.

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304 'Silesion' Squadron lost 106 men in total during wartime operations. During its two years with Coastal Command it attacked 34 U-Boats and sank two, U-441 and U-3221. The squadron ended the war based at St. Eval in Cornwall, from were W/O Marezak Flying Wellington HF329 - 'Y' attacked and sank U-321 at the wars end.

WAR GRAVES

Within the registers of the British Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Milltown is listed as:
"Belfast (Milltown) Roman Catholic Cemetery (Index No. U.K. 7220)"

The 1914-1918 (First World War period) burials, numbering 105, are scattered throughout the burial ground. After the war a Cross of Sacrifice, approached by a short flight of steps, was erected on a prominent corner site, with a screen wall behind it on which are recorded the names of those casualties whose graves cannot be marked by headstones.

In the early months of the 1939-45 War a special section was set aside for service war graves, but this was not generally used. Originally there were 28 burials in the plot, but 13 Belgian graves were moved by the authorities concerned to the Belgian plot in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England. There are now in this group 15 graves, and also a special memorial commemorating three British soldiers whose collective graves elsewhere in the cemetery could not be marked by a headstone.

The total number of British service graves in the cemetery is 56; 50 World War 2, and six post war 1940's circa. (See classified chart illustrated below) The British a Commonwealth graves have the traditional commission headstones and the seven Polish airforce graves have the Polish eagle on headstones designed to harmonise with them.

FORCES	NAVY		ARMY		AIR FORCE		MER. NAVY		TOTALS	
	KNOWN	UNKNOWN	KNOWN	UNKNOWN	KNOWN	UNKNOWN	KNOWN	UNKNOWN	KNOWN	UNKNOWN
UK	5	-	24	-	11	-	6	-	46	-
CANADIAN	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-
N. ZEALAND	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
POLAND	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	7	-
	5	-	24	-	21	-	-		56	-

In the World War 1 cemeteries of France lie the remains of those Belfast Catholics who died as a result of service within the 16th Irish Division.

THE POOR GROUNDS

Stand at the new burial section within the cemetery and look across towards the 16th Irish Division memorial cross on the main walkway crossroads, and your eyes scan across an open area of open fields which to most appear as unused ground for future burials.

But sadly this is not the case for that area holds a secret of despair, poverty and a neglect to human dignity. For this is Milltown's poor ground where thousands upon thousands of human beings are buried on top of each other because they were deemed to poor to afford a piece of ground in which to have their remains buried with some dignity.

ONE CASE

The tragic stories of these people are buried with them and is a book in itself which would be well titled as 'Mans Inhumanity to Man.'

To highlight the poigency of one case we have sighted as an example a youth called James Curran

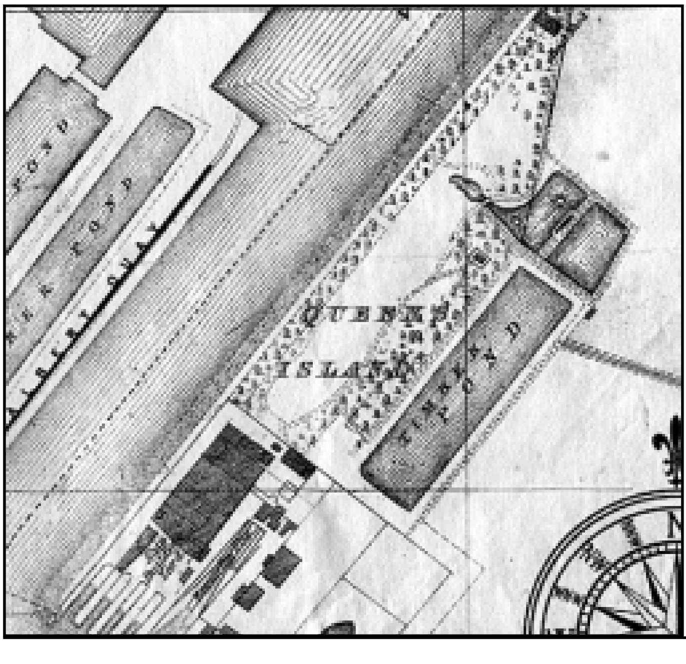
This fifteen year old, who lived at 11 Trench Street on the Short Strand, became the first victim of the political riots of June 1886 which originated out of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. Orange anger was inflamed from press, platform and pulpit, spelling out what dire disaster would fall upon them if the Home Rule bill became law.

In what was now the customary beginning, Catholic workers were attacked in the shipyards. The ship wrights employed in Harland & Wolff attacked the dockers at Alexandra Basin overwhelming them in numbers. James Curran, a boy who was not in the best of health, probably under nourished, working to support his mother, was flung into the water, but despite not being able to swim found refuge on a raft.

However while clinging for his life he was 'riveted' off the raft with iron bolts flung by the ship carpenters until he fell back into the water and disappeared.

Andrew Boyd's book Holy War in Belfast describes the horrific details;-

Michael Hale, who worked for the Belfast Harbour Board, was the first to see the shipyard men approaching, and he reckoned there were more than 300 of them, all armed with staves, iron bars, hammers, axes and anything else that would serve as a weapon. They surged into Alexandra Dock, shouting abuse at the navvies.



The navvies in the dock, surprised and outnumbered by the shipyard men, were trapped. Their only way of escape was by water, and some of them clambered on to a raft which Hale and a carpenter named Walsh had pushed out into the stream. The raft was but a few yards out from the dockside when the shipyard men reached the waters edge and began throwing iron nuts and bolts, stones, metal rivets and lengths of piping at the navvies. Hale, who was a good swimmer, pushed the raft out as far as he could, then left it and swam towards a barge which was also crowded with men.

Those navvies who were too slow in making their escape fell into the hands of the shipyard men and were given terrible beatings. Ten of them, including the carpenter Walsh, were so severely injured that they had to be taken to hospital. Walsh lay critically ill with multiple injuries for several weeks.

When Hale reached the barge three men were still struggling in the water. Two were pulled aboard, but before anyone could rescue the third, a youth named James Curran, the barge drifted away.

Hale watched Curran struggling in the water and hoped he would be able to make the shore. But Curran could not swim. He drowned in full view of hundreds of navvies and shipyard men, not one of whom made the least effort to save him. According to one report circulating in Belfast that day, Curran actually caught hold of the jetty but was kicked into the water again by the shipyard men.

His body was recovered on the 6th June, and he was buried two days later on the 8th of the month. It was reported that thousands gathered from all over Belfast for the funeral as it made its way from Short Strand to Milltown.

SHOTS FIRED

Belfast was fraught with tension, serious rioting had already erupted on Sunday night of the 6th, but despite this one witness said "the funeral procession was a most orderly procession and everyone seemed to be impressed with the sadness that called it forth." At one point before arriving at Milltown a section of the procession was stoned, and shots were reported being fired into the air at the direction of mourners.

BARON SPACE

It was reported that 15,000 people gathered to watch or mourn that lad's death. This being the case it is ironic that he was buried in the poor ground with not even a marker! A fair amount of those people were probably no better off than James Curran's mother, but had even a small percentage of that 15,000 donated a half penny, James Curran would have been buried with some decency. As it stands he is an unknown statistic among the thousands piled into the large baron space that is simply referred to as the 'poor ground.'

James Curran does not have a headstone, but he is no longer a forgotten statistic, for this book is his marker, a headstone for the thousands he lies buried with, this is their dedication, as there is not even a small memorial stone marking the poor ground.

ABOVE & BELOW - THE 'POOR GRAVES' OF MILLTOWN CEMETERY. THESE CONTAIN THE REMAINS OF OVER 85,000 PEOPLE.

HERE LIE THE REMAINS OF...

There are a wide diversity of people buried in Milltown. The following are just a tiny selection of them and we begin it with the grave of one of the best historians Belfast has ever known.

IRISH NEWS 2nd August, 1957 Written by"C"

The death of Cathal O'Byrne at an advanced age, after a lengthy illness, removes from Belfast a popular and versatile personality. His was once a notable figure here in the early days of the Gaelic League, when he strode around on festive occasions in a saffron kilt and a flowing blue bow.

He helped Francis Joseph Bigger of Ard Righ, Antrim Road, prominent in the Irish revival movement, writer and publicist, to popularise the use of parish or area flags with local designs or coats of arms, instead of the cruder forms then in use. He was the friend and associate in these matters of such notable personalities as Sir Roger Casement; Mrs Stopfoed Green, the historian; Joe Devlin and his family; Denis McCullagh, a prosperous Dublin man; Joe Campbell, the artist and poet; Colm O'Loughlen, Dublin publisher; Joseph Connolly, later head of Board of Trade, Dublin; the late Simon O'Leary, and several of the better known figures in the Ulster Literary Theatre, like the Morrows.

All over Ireland he was hailed for years as a versatile platform talker and entertainer. His racy recital of Ulster countryside stories as well as Belfast tales, established him in a niche of his own.

His sweet tenor and clear enunciation gave a new vogue to the several traditional songs. When he sang ballads like: "The Mountains of Pomeroy" he lent them a special significance. His rendering of "The Maid of the Sweet Brown Knowe," "The Stuttering Lovers," set up a standard that has not been rivalled in all the years between.

He was born in Co. Down, although he always said his forbears came from Wicklow. His people must have moved into Belfast at an early age. Whenever he touched upon those early years, he indicated that his people had come to reside in the Balmoral area when he was a child. He says he knew the red brick ivy covered house at Malone under the thatched roof of which King William the Third had sheltered at the time (1690) he had landed at Carrickfergus on his way to the Boyne. The name of the house, "Orange Grove," had been changed in modern times to "Cranmore".

When I first knew him (around 1902) he was in business for himself running a spirit grocery at 122 Beersbridge Road together with his sister, Teresa. Some years later they had given up the business. Miss O'Byrne had gone to work in a warehouse and they were living elsewhere. His work as a singer brought him to most of the Northern counties, as well as to Dublin and other Irish cities, and indeed places in Britain.

In the interval his Belfast stories came under the notice of 'Franc' Williams of 'Ireland's Saturday Night' and soon they had a racy series. 'Mrs Twiggelty's Weekly Letter,' appearing there, with 'Margot Bella' as the leading character.

HIS BOOKS

This publication (Irish News) brought him much appreciation but as usual there were the over critical friends who thought it a reflection upon the nation because some of them had continued to use the dialect of the countryside!

He had begun to publish verse. The first volume "Lane of the Thrushes" was issued in collaboration with a Northern public man. The followed "The Grey Feet of the Wind," "Wayfarers," a volume of short stories, "Far From the Green Hills." He made up a slender volume, "The Gaelic Source of the Bronte Genius." He claimed that the old home of his grandmother of the Bronte's was at Ballynaskeagh, County Down, where Alice McClorey lived with her brother - Red Paddy. They were orphans. Paddy got to know a Hugh Prunty from Newry when they were working in the lime kilns. Prunty fell in love with Alice McClorey, who ran off and was married in a Protestant church at Magherally, Co. Down, in 1776. Those were the grandparents of the Bronte sisters, Charlotte and Emily.

There father was something of a snob, he changed the name to Bronte and became a Parson in the Church of England. Cathal thought it was, however, the Gaelic trait and imagination of the McClorey race that infused the talent that blossomed forth in the grandchildren.

He was enabled to visit the Continent and his volume, "Pilgrim in Italy," afforded him an opportunity for a description of the colourful roads, cities and especially the old churches, with their pictures, in which his pen revelled. He was so full of the places of Rome that he could barely keep them out of his talks with his friends for some years after. He had a liquid style, with a faculty of making a reader see the objects of his own enthusiasm clearly. His Italian sketches are both readable and informative.

He read anything he could lay hands upon in the Linenhall or Public Libraries, specialising in the history of the streets of the city, noting the changing names and the traders or people connected with them from time to time. He could write very short articles or just over a thousand words, without paddling, which found an open door in most Irish literary editorial rooms. Examples of these can be found in his "As I Roved Out" volume issued in 1946, of articles which appeared in the Irish news, which printed the book. The titles tell the tale: 'Lazar Houses Near Belfast,' 'The Man Who Built Stormont,' (not the modern Parliament but the turreted castle) 'The Cavehill in 98,' 'Stranmillis and its Pleasant Stream,' 'In Old Donegall Street,' 'Ann Street and its Entries,' 'How Belfast Streets Got Their Names.'

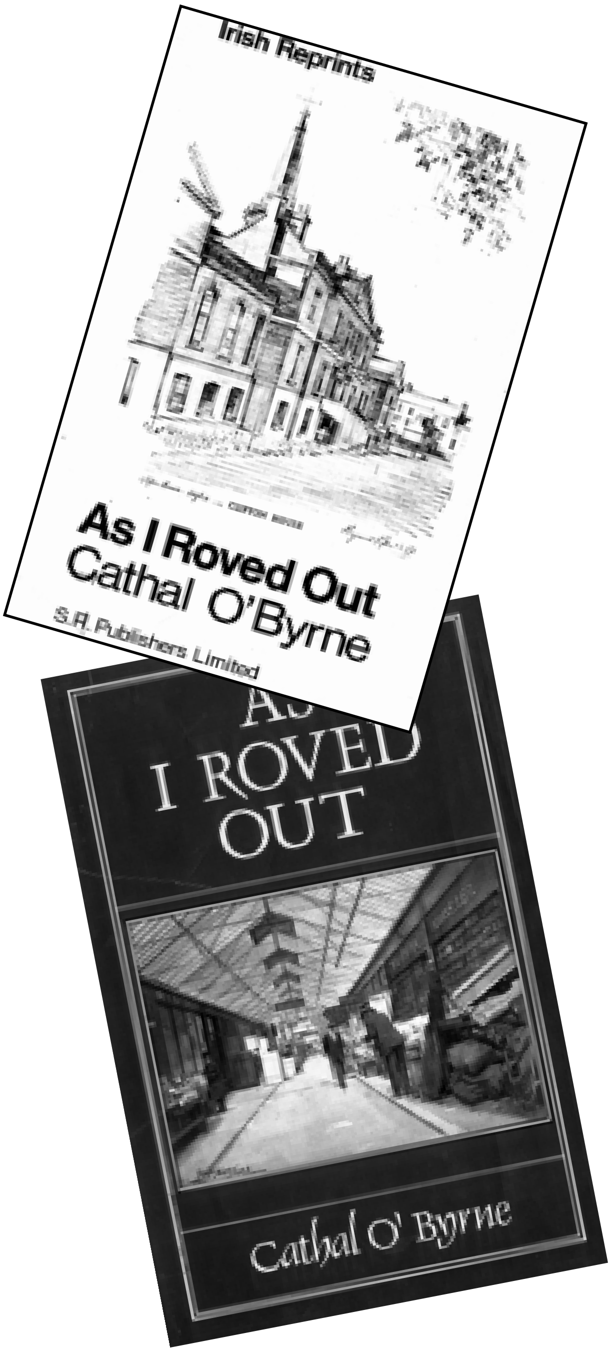
He had a lot to say about the avidity with which Belfast folk adopted the names of the British Royal family for their streets and squares; sometimes they were of Teutonic origin. 'Albert' figures several times in the names of street, place, square, bridge and avenue. The 'Queen' is repeated many times as well as 'Victoria,' 'Ann' and 'Elizabeth.' Then come the 'Prince' and 'Princess.' Ballymacarrett the town of Art (O'Neill), Castlereagh, from grey Castle of Con O'Neill; Arthur - after the Donegall family. Cromac means bending or crooked; Falls, a hedge; Farset, Beal-Farset, after the river of that name.

An admirer of the rebel men of 1798, he just can not help dragging the McCracken's into a dozen of these contributions. He says Mary Anne taught school in Frederick Street and that Lord Edward stayed in an inn there, during which time there was a thousand pounds offered for his apprehension.

EXPERT ON BELFAST

Of his politics one can only say that they were rather narrow. Being formed in the early days of the Gaelic Revival, he did not take much account of the changing conditions since partition. There is at times a bitterness with Planters and their work, which rather disputes some of his short sketches. However that may be, he held no personal rancour against anyone on "the other side."

``I regarded it as a great tribute to Cathal's research in regard to Belfast affairs when an assistant in the Linenhall Library told me that whenever someone asked for details of a place in the locality he often turned, as if by instinct, to the "As I Roved Out" volume, rightly termed a Book of the North. He seems to have been giving himself the pleasure of visiting spots made notable by their identification with famous events or personages. It is not the dry bones of history he sets down but the human pulsating moments with



their colourful associations with the matter in hand.

He dedicated the book to his life long friend Francis Joseph Bigger, who was dead when the volume appeared. Bigger spent most of his own spare time and some of his fortune in presenting flags with local identifications to bands and groups of young men.

The old stage coaches, he says, were brought to Belfast in 1752 and occasionally attacked by robbers, as Dr William Drennan describes to his sister, Mrs McTier.

Before Belfast was heard of even as a village the Lagan and Farset rivers met at the foot of High Street opposite Skipper Street, on the promontory of which was built the Chapel of the Ford. He claims that Belfast from its foundations was both Catholic and Gaelic - Beal Feirsde. After the Reformation, the church was rebuilt and became the Protestant Church of Belfast. It was here that the body of Henry Joy McCracken was interred. Mary McCracken says: "Several of the houses in Church Lane are built over the ground where my poor brother was laid."

The City Cemetery was once a bleach green, the property of William Sinclair, who kept hawks and falcons at his house in Donegall Place.
At one time the butchers of Belfast had to send to the Mayor or Sovereign a tongue from each beast killed. What he did with such a collection of tongues daily nobody can now say.

HUNGER RIOTS

Cathal recalls visiting circuses setting up in the Chapel fields or Alfred Street, and the famous Irish clown, Johnny Patterson, giving out a question time query like “Why is Donegal Street like a spendthrift?” “Because it begins with a bank and ends with a poor house.”
In his article on “Hunger Riots in Old Belfast,” he says; “Within living memory children were kept working in Belfast mills and factories from six o’clock in the morning until six o’clock at night for the munificent sum of two shillings and nine pence - half a dollar a week.” Joe Devlin it was who changed that. The sabbatarian character of Belfast was not in evidence in 1801, when a certain Mr Inchdeon, a famous singer, was prevailed upon during a nine days concert engagement, to sing on behalf of the funds of the old Poor House in Clifton Street. He sang - of all places - in St Anne's Church, in Donegall Street. The price of admission was three shillings and £81. 11s 4d was taken at the door.
When he recorded the Victory of Lord Lurgan’s “Master McGrath,” noting that a marble replica of the dog had been set up on the road between Dungarvan and Clonmel, Cathal says: “The Irish portion of the cheering crowd would have been better employed putting soot upon its own crook.”

CATHAL O’BYRNE

JOE DEVLIN

IRISH NEWS, FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 1934

It is with feelings of the most profound sorrow that we record the death of Mr Joseph Devlin, M.P., who passed away in St John’s Private Nursing Home at 9.45 yesterday morning.
This has ended the career of one of Ireland’s noblest sons, and the news will send a pang of sorrow through the hearts of Irish men and women in all parts of the civilised world.
The late Mr Devlin had been in failing health for almost a year, but following a sojourn at an English resort he was apparently making a good recovery, and his thousands of friends and admirers were hopeful that he would soon be restored to his old time vigour.
He had been back in Belfast for some weeks and was well enough to attend the funeral of his friend, Mr Vincent Devoto, on Wednesday morning of last week.
Unfortunately, however, he had a severe relapse on Friday, and was removed to the Nursing Home. His condition during that night gave cause for grave anxiety, but there was some improvement during Saturday and Sunday, and hopes of his recovery were raised.
He had, unhappily, a serious turn for the worse during Sunday night, and the constant attention of his medical advisers and the tender nursing of the Sisters of Mercy and the nursing staff failed to bring about an improvement during the succeeding days.
There seemed to be again a very slight change for the better on Wednesday when he slept very well. He had a comfortable night, but during the morning he took a sudden turn for the worse and passed peacefully away in the arms of one of his oldest friends, Father George Galbraith, of Cardonald, Glasgow.

Joseph Devlin throughout his career could advocate the cause of the people with authority because he belonged to the people. The Devlin clan came from one of the old Celtic sects who clung to their homeland around the shores of Lough Neagh through centuries of strife and hardship, and whose representatives are still to be found today in Antrim, Armagh and Tyrone. He had much of the tenacity of character which their history indicates.
His own people, like many others, were driven from the country by the conditions of the times into the growing city of Belfast, and lived in humble circumstances in the West Division. A little household typical of thousands where life was a daily struggle to avert poverty, and where the youngest were expected to do their share, was the home of his early years. He was brought into touch with realities of the Belfast workers’ life at a tender age, and the impressions then, created were never effaced. The greater part of his political endeavour and that of which he was most proud lay in the direction of improving the lot of those workers amongst whom his boyhood was spent. No one sympathised with them more thoroughly or better

appreciated their good qualities, and his early training fitted him admirably for the part he was destined to play as the champion of the democracy of his native city.

HIS BOYHOOD DAYS

Born at 41 Alexander Street West in 1872, the son of Charles and Elizabeth Devlin, he entered the Christian Brothers' School (St Mary's) in Divis Street at the age of 6 years. A precocious boy by reason of the influence of his surroundings acting on quick intelligence, he proved an apt pupil, and made rapid progress through the primary division of the school as well as developing an inordinate love of reading. This found its chief satisfaction in the study of Irish history at an age when the compulsory and often painful perusal of black letter primers is with most boys the only literary variant to the joys of spinning tops and marbles.

At the 'mature' age of eleven he had qualified to sit for the Intermediate Examination, Junior Grade, and passed with honours in English and natural philosophy. His old master - Brother O'Farrell - took a natural pride in the achievements of his young pupil, and was spared to watch with close interest and sympathy the subsequent progress of one whose early training he had presided over.

HIS EARLY ENTHUSIASM

Like the majority of the Catholic youth of Belfast at that period, he left school early to take his part in the battle of life, but, unlike many others, he did not regard his education as completed once he relinquished school for a minor position in a business house. On the contrary, he was very keen for self-improvement, not so much in vogue then as now, and, in addition to extending the scope of his reading, he became an enthusiast for elocution, classes and debating societies.

The Sexton Debating Society, founded under the patronage of Mr Thomas Sexton (whose return for West Belfast in 1886 with a majority of 103 roused Nationalist enthusiasm in Belfast to a high pitch) had in the youth, Joseph Devlin, one of its most active members. Possibly its establishment and the arduous campaigns of that memorable election represent the first contact with Irish politics of this practical Belfast lad - a practical idealist, if one may use the paradoxical phrase - whose destiny it was to play such a large part in the public life of his country.

It was a modest organisation, holding its meetings in rooms near Smithfield. Judging from the records of its proceedings which are still extant, if it was not an ostentatious body, it was an exceedingly virile one and the weekly debates were not allowed to degenerate into academic dullness. Indeed liveliness and vigor of retort would appear to have been essential qualities for any participant in the proceedings, and the fact that young Devlin (then aged between 13 and 14 and earning his own living) was elected its chairman is an early tribute to the possession of powers afterwards to be displayed in a wider arena. He inspired a number of his companions with the same zeal for knowledge as he himself possessed and they attached themselves to elocution classes which were then being conducted in St. Mary's Hall. So, his first essays in the art wherein he excelled were made within that very building whose walls resounded to his eloquence on many historic occasions in later years.

ORATORICAL GIFTS AS A BOY

As the Sexton Debating Society was an important feature in the early life and training of the future Irish leader it will not be out of place to introduce a more detailed reference to it here. It was founded on November 21st, 1885, and its motto was "Educate that you may be free," while its objects were declared to be "the creation of a national taste for Irish literature among the youth of the city of Belfast and the fostering of a healthy spirit of educated criticism among its members." Its patron was the Right Hon. Thomas Sexton, M.P., Lord Mayor of Dublin, and its president, Joseph Devlin, and the latter's energy and example made it a very live, effective society for a number

of years. The work which he then performed for Nationalism, in which he was so intense a believer, was more fitted for a man of mature years than for a boy, and the Sexton Debating Society will always hold an honoured place in the history of Belfast Nationalism as the cradle of those remarkable abilities which were afterwards devoted to the service of the nation.

The minute book of the Society gives us glimpses into the things that moulded the boyhood of Mr Devlin and laid the ground work of the great career that was to follow. The debates revealed that remarkable gift of oratory which made Mr Devlin's name famous the world over.

WHEN WEST BELFAST WAS FIRST WON

He was little more than a boy when Thomas Sexton, then the most brilliant orator in the Irish Parliamentary Party, was chosen by Parnell to contest West Belfast at the General Election of 1885. Although opposed by a formidable local opponent in the person of Mr J. H. (later Sir James) Haslett, Mr Sexton put up a glorious fight, being defeated by only 35 votes.

Now encouraged, the Nationalists redoubled their efforts, and in the following year (1886) Mr Sexton wrested the seat from the Tories for the first time, defeating Mr Haslett by 3,832 to 3,729 - a majority of 103.

The Nationalist victory greatly incensed the Orangemen and fierce rioting followed. Their triumphs at the polls however, gave a new impetus to Nationalist enthusiasm. The little band, under their leader Joe, found a new element of vitality and permanence and purpose in the winning of West Belfast. The embryo organisation already referred to became the Sexton Debating Society in honour of the new M.P. The Sexton Society was merged into the Young Ireland Society, which in 1886 awarded Mr Devlin a silver medal for elocution. Mr Sexton honoured the Society with his patronage and attended one of the meetings to receive an address.

THOMAS SEXTON'S TRIBUTE

It was a red letter day in the life of Mr Devlin. His boyish speech, with its freshness, its sincerity, its passion and eloquence for one so young quite captivated the great orator and in the course of a glowing tribute to the boy Mr Sexton, addressing him, said "I regret the rule which obliges all members of the House of Commons to be at least twenty one years of age, for your eloquence entitles you to a place among its members." It was a unique tribute and almost prophetic in its language.

Mr Devlin went to the Irish News in 1891, and was appointed assistant sub editor. He left the Irish News in 1893 to become Belfast correspondent of the Freeman's Journal.

When a Belfast contingent made the journey to Kilkenny in 1891 in support of the candidature of Sir John Pope Hennessy, Mr Devlin was one of their number. That was the first political campaign in which he took part, except

AN EARLY PICTURE OF JOE DEVLIN

when as a lad he volunteered in the famous contest in 1886, when, as stated, Mr Thomas Sexton, whom he was destined to succeed in its representation, won the day.

Unfortunately in 1892, Mr H Arnold-Forster defeated Mr Sexton by 839, and was returned unopposed in the subsequent elections of 1896 and 1900.

The next attempt to recapture the seat was made by the late Mr Patrick Dempsey in 1905, but Mr Arnold-Foster defeated him by 241.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

In 1892, when he was becoming more prominent in Irish politics, Mr Devlin was elected by the Belfast Central Branch of the Irish National federation to attend the Executive Council of the Federation in Dublin.

About 1893 or '94 Mr Devlin, who had by that time made a name for himself as a debater, accepted the secretaryship of the Belfast Young Ireland Society. He was a most active secretary of that organisation and brought a wonderful lot of able lecturers on the platform. He gathered around him a talented body of young enthusiastic men for several years.

A great Convention was held in Dublin in 1897, under the presidency of the Most Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe, and afterwards Cardinal-Primate of All Ireland. Mr Devlin was present, and was paid a tribute by the Lord Bishop. His remarks were perfectly justified because Mr Devlin's powers of oratory were exhibited in a very striking way at the Convention. Several of his speeches inspired the audience - vast in numbers and representative of the whole country - to unbounded enthusiasm, and he became immediately a national figure in Irish politics.

MARKED OUT FOR LEADERSHIP

It was at this convention that Mr Devlin really came prominently before the whole Irish public. Those sterling qualities which, up to that period, were known only to Belfast Nationalists, came to be recognised then by the representatives of Irish Nationalism as a whole. Indeed it became evident that in Mr Devlin Ireland had found a leader - young in years, no doubt - but wise and courageous as befitted a man upon whom must fall the mantle of eminent predecessors. "Wise in the council, fearless in the fray," was the description aptly applied to Mr Devlin by Mr Michael McCartan M.P., then one of the most loved and thoughtful members of the gallant band of Nationalists who were fighting the cause of this country on the floor of the British House of Commons.

ENVOY TO AMERICA

Mr Devlin's widespread popularity was manifested in the decision of the Irish Party to send him with Mr W. Redmond as ambassadors in 1902 to organise the United Ireland League in the United States of America. It was on the 27th of January of that year that Mr Devlin left his native city for that important mission. The occasion was marked by scenes of enthusiasm rarely equalled even in those days of spirited National pride. At Donegall Quay a presentation was made by Mr Devlin, acknowledging which, Mr Devlin said he regarded his inclusion on that mission as a special honour because he felt it was a tribute to the public worth and services of the Nationalist men and women of Belfast. There were thrilling scenes as the boat cast off her moorings.

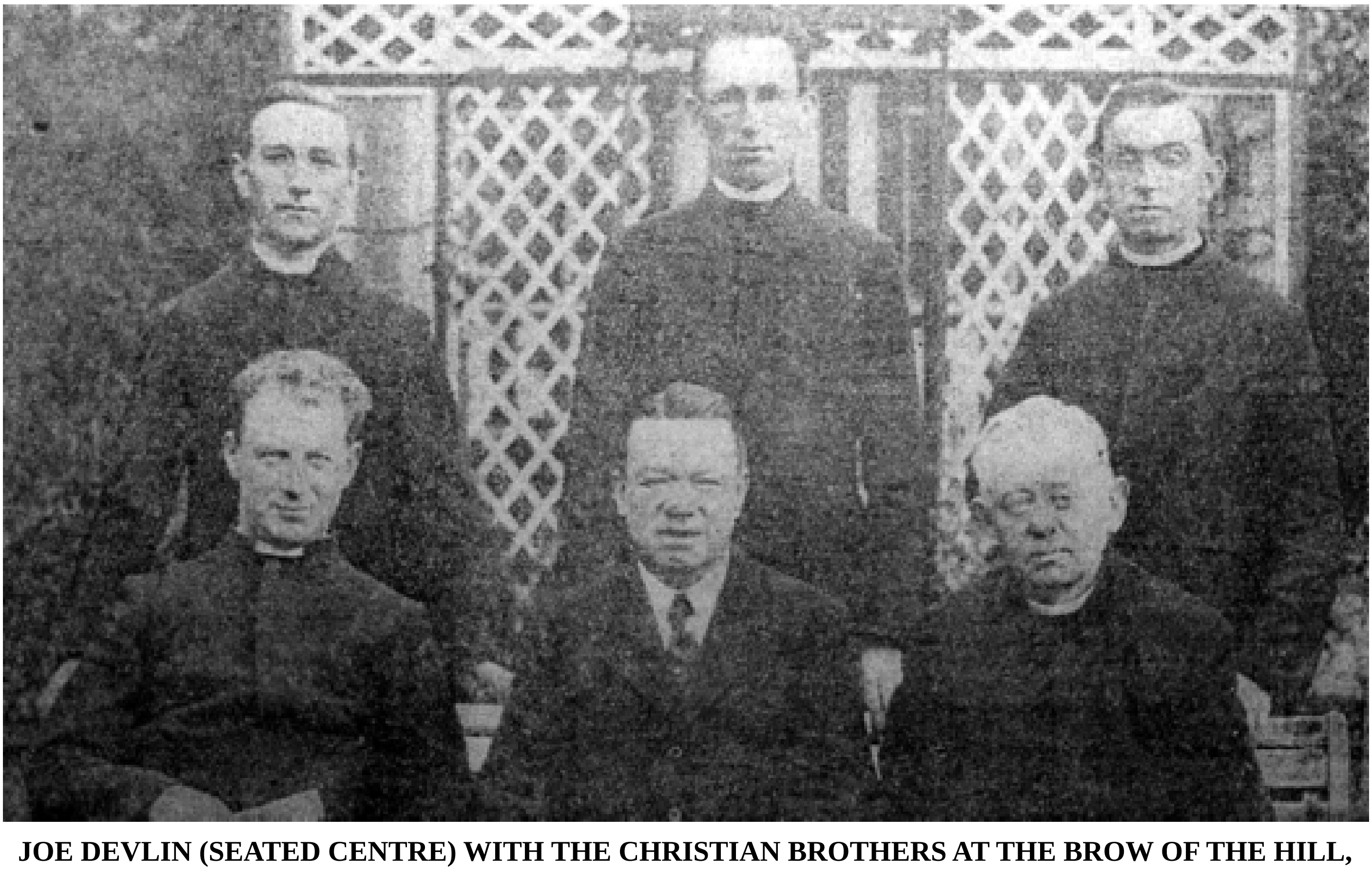
HONOURED BY IRISH PARTY

On the 28th of January Mr Devlin and Mr William Redmond were entertained to a complimentary dinner by the Irish Party in the House of Commons. The attendance was larger than any other social gathering of the Party since the days of Parnell. Mr John Redmond presided and spoke of the qualities of Mr Devlin that fitted him as an emissary of the nation to America.

No finer tribute could be paid to any colleague than that which the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party gave to Mr Devlin. Speaking of him, Mr John Redmond M.P., said: "Mr Devlin's career has been a proud one for Ireland. It has been more than that - it has been a hopeful one for Ireland. Few public careers in the last century have been so rapid as the career of Mr Devlin. He today holds a foremost position in the public life of our country, and if I were asked to explain the reason, in my opinion, for the rapidity and success of his career, I would say that its success and rapidity have been due to the combination of several great qualities - superb debating power and dauntless courage, combined with a cautious mind and a cool judgment; transparent honesty and enthusiasm combined with an absolutely untiring industry; perfect loyalty to his leader for the time being, to his comrades, and to his Party - combined, let me say, with a modest and lovable disposition.

A SUCCESSFUL TOUR

The tour of the Irish ambassadors was everywhere characterised by that fervour and enthusiasm which the Irish exiles have always shown to the members of their race who



JOE DEVLIN (SEATED CENTRE) WITH THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS AT THE BROW OF THE HILL, DERRY, AROUND 1925

try to achieve the best results for the land of their birth.
In Washington, the centre of American independence, Mr Devlin spoke to a huge concourse, and in his address he said: *No apologist for England can say that Ireland cannot do better for Ireland than England has done for her. We, representatives of the people, have never failed to raise our voices in Parliament and elsewhere in the cause of liberty.*
Amid scenes that almost baffled description Mr Devlin returned to Belfast on the 2nd of July of the same year. He was met by a huge procession with bands and torchlight. The horses were unyoked from the carriage in which Mr Devlin was seated, and drawn by sturdy young men through the principal thoroughfares of the city to Smithfield Square, where Mr Devlin spoke of the unity of the Irish race in America, and their love for the cradle land of their birth.
The occasion of the reception was saddened by the fact that his mother died on the 30th March during his absence.

ELECTED FOR KILKENNY

While Mr Devlin was absent in America the Nationalists of North Kilkenny unanimously chose him to represent them in Parliament. He was returned without opposition. His unopposed return for Kilkenny was made the occasion of a thrilling demonstration through the constituency of West Belfast. A number of prominent citizens who were then fighting side by side with Mr Devlin for the liberation of their country said that the selection was worthy of all Ireland, for North Kilkenny had in Mr Joseph Devlin one of the bravest sons of Ireland and the Irish Party one of the most gifted and promising colleagues.
In the middle of the year 1905 he went to Australia with Mr John Donovan and Mr R. Hazelton, as a delegate from the Irish Party. The success of that mission was assured from the outset, and everywhere the delegation went through the Land of the Southern Cross they were received with unbound enthusiasm.
Mr Devlin was the first General Secretary of the United Irish League. His unique gift for organisation manifested itself in the establishment of branches of the organisation in practically all parts of the country with the National branch in Belfast.

WEST BELFAST WON BACK

As stated Mr Sexton lost West Belfast in 1892, but the Nationalist cause triumphed 14 years later, when at the General Election of 1906 Mr Devlin was elected by a majority of 16, the voting being:-

Devlin	....	4,138
Smiley	.....	4,122
Carlisle	.....	153

There was an indescribable outburst of enthusiasm when the figures were announced. Angered by the rout of the Tory, a mob of Unionists, who had been expecting the defeat of Mr Devlin and had come to the Courthouse on the Crumlin Road, where the votes were counted, with drums, bands and banners to celebrate the event, gave full expression in the usual manner to their chagrin. As Mr Devlin, M.P., was descending the steps of the Courthouse, surrounded by his friends, a police inspector advised him not to leave that way. Mr Devlin's response was characteristic. "I am not going to sneak out by the back way." He then proceeded down the steps in face of the mob, and one of the police, realising his undaunted courage, shouted for fair play for Mr Devlin.
The West was truly awake that night; it was Belfast's night of jubilation, in which old and young came out to expression to the joy they felt at the triumph of their fellow citizen - a man who later was destined to plead their cause all over the civilised world. The historic division that night was ablaze with bonfires and illuminations, and the dawn had broken before the people retired to rest.

FIGHT FOR THE WORKERS

In the succeeding years the voice of Mr Devlin was raised on behalf of a people in Belfast and elsewhere whose plight in the industrial world constituted a stigma on the fair name of the North. Night after night during the historic Irish debates at St Stephen's, the member for West Belfast, in speeches replete with convincing facts and figures exposed to the world the dreadful conditions under which the poor workers in the mills and factories of Belfast and other centres of the linen industry were being drained of their very lifeblood. Supported by his colleagues in the Irish Party Mr Devlin, in face of the unrelenting opposition of the Tories, especially the Ulster brand, appealed to the Government for an investigation into the conditions appertaining in the industry. He succeeded after a herculean struggle in having the unhappy lot of the workers improved. The sweating system that had obtained up to that time not only for mature workers but for the poor little 'half timers' was swept away and a state of affairs more in conformity with Christian ethics was set up.

DEATH-KNELL OF SWEATING

He was the pioneer in bring about the passing of the Trade Board Act, which brought to a close that system of sweating. Large profit accrued to the employers as the results of the wretched wages paid to thousands of those who were employed in mills and factories, and more particularly those who did factory work such as embroidery and sprigging in their own homes. His revelations, based on the report of the Medical Superintendent of Health, were simply appalling, showing as they did that women and girls had to work for long, weary hours for a few miserable coppers. These terrible conditions played havoc with the health of of the unfortunate victims, and thousands fell a prey to the dreaded white scourge.
Mr Devlin revolted against this shocking state of affairs, and he was unceasing in his efforts until he secured reasonable hours of working and at least a living wage for a class in whom he had all his life taken an abiding interest, and whose welfare he ever had at heart. This fact was never forgotten by the toiling masses. His most loyal supporters were the mill and factory hands, and subsequently their children who stood by him through all the vicissitudes and changes that occurred in Irish political life.

JOE DEVLIN (CENTRE SEATED) AT A ST PATRICK'S DAY BANQUET IN ST MARY'S HALL, 1931

If Mr Devlin had done nothing else in his long and glorious public career than this noble work, he has earned the undying gratitude of all who are interested in human welfare. Let it be here said that many people not holding the political views of Mr Devlin courageously acknowledged that his efforts for the common people had been fraught with unbounded blessings for the entire city, of which Mr Devlin, no matter in what company he happened to be, was proud to boast of his citizenship.

Mr Devlin's political career of course continued through the Home Rule crises, the First World War, the Easter Rising, the partition of Ireland and the conflict in Belfast which followed. It was during this time that Mr Devlin lost one of his closest friends when Owen McMahon were slaughtered in their home in March 1922. Mr Devlin's political career at this period still cause controversy to this day and for more reading into this see Eamon Phoenix's book 'Northern Nationalism.'

THE FUNERAL OF JOE DEVLIN

Belfast Telegraph Saturday, 20th January, 1934

The funeral of Mr Joseph Devlin, M.P., whose remains were interred in Milltown Cemetery today, was a remarkable expression of public sorrow.

To give an adequate idea of its magnitude would be a difficult task. There were miles of people wedged in a solid mass; the streets were black in the most literal sense of the term. Those who could not find a place in the traffic pressure climbed on walls and gates and windowsills to watch the cortege pass.

It was noteworthy, too, in its cosmopolitanism, it was a mixed concourse mourning a common loss, units in a sorrowing pageant.

Westminster was represented largely by the Unionist members who were Mr Devlin's colleagues in the Imperial House, who came to do honour to their departed comrade. Scotland sent over its ambassadors from the Ancient Order of Hibernians and from other political bodies to participate in the solemn escort, and so did the Free State.

Rich and poor mingled side by side, but it is safe to assume, without detracting from the homage of the others, that the most heartbroken people in the cortege were the women and children who wept for their benefactor, the man who brought them all to the seaside year after year, and who was to them a Santa Claus in all season.

TWO CABINETS REPRESENTED

The Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, whose message of sympathy touched the whole community, could not attend, but he was represented by the Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Mr R. Gransden. The Speaker of the House of Commons, Captain Harry Mulholland was absent through illness, and Mr W. Gibson, Librarian in the Northern parliament deputised him.

The Free State Executive Council was represented by Mr Vivian De Valera (son of the President); Mr Sean McEntee, Minister of Finance and Mr T Derrig , Minister of Education. Others from the South included Mr William Cosgrave, ex-President; General O'Duffy and General Mulcahy.

IN THE PRO CATHEDRAL

Since the transfer of the body from the nursing home to the Pro-Catherdral the church was almost continuously crowded by worshippers who filed past the coffin and touched it on their way, carrying with them the sad thought that they had seen the last of their political friend and champion.

This morning the Cathedral was filled to over flowing from an early hour and thousands had to remain outside. The High Alter draped in the trappings of mourning radiated its own message. On a catafalque in the centre aisle lay all that was mortal of Joseph Devlin. The coffin of white oak, hand polished and waxed, had Egyptian bronze mountings, and bore the simple inscription:-

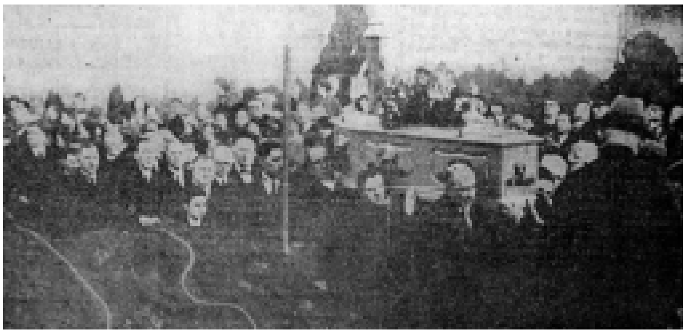
JOSEPH DEVLIN, M.P.
Died January 18, 1934

There were hundreds of wreaths, but only one had a place on the coffin. It was from Mr Devlin's sister, Mrs Montgomery, and her son.

Solemn Requiem Mass (Coram Pontifice) was celebrated at 10am. His Eminence Cardinal MacRory presided, assisted by the Most Rev. Dr Mageean, Bishop of Down and Connor. The celebrant of the Mass was the Rev. J. O'Neill assisted by the Rev. J. McBride. Priests were

JOE DEVLIN'S COFFIN LEAVING
St. PETER'S PRO-CATHEDRAL

MINISTERS FROM BOTH THE NORTHERN AND FREE STATE PARLIAMENTS ATTENDING THE FUNERAL



JOE DEVLIN'S COFFIN ENTERING
MILLTOWN CEMETERY

present not only from Ulster but from every part of Ireland. The visiting clergy from a distance included the Rev. George Galbraith who travelled specially from Glasgow, and who was with Mr Devlin when he died.

THE DEAD MARCH

The chanters were the Rev. Vincent Davey (St Patrick's) and the Rev. J. Walls (Holy Family). After the Mass the absolutions were pronounced by the Lord Bishop. A feature of the ceremony was the impressive music beautifully harmonised under the direction of Mr T. Picton (organist), who played with sensitive understanding the 'Dead March in Saul', as the remains were borne down the centre aisle to the waiting four horse hearse which brought them to their last resting place. The hearse itself was a symbol of Mr Devlin's innate simplicity.

The order of the funeral procession was as follows.

Clergy
Senior pupils of Christian Brothers Schools
Hearse
Chief mourners - Mrs Teresa Montgomery (sister), Master Joseph Montgomery (nephew), Miss. M. Mullan (niece), Mrs O'Connell (niece), Mr D. O'Connell (nephew-in-law), Mr & Mrs J McArdle (Bangor), Mr & Mrs R. Parker, Mary Mullan, John and William (relatives)
Members and representatives of the Governments of Northern Ireland and the Free State.
Members of both Houses of Parliament of Northern Ireland and the Free State.
Lord Mayors and members of Belfast and Dublin Corporations.
Representatives of other public bodies in Northern Ireland and Free State.
Members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.
Members of the Irish National Foresters.
Members of other organisations and the general public.

MOURNING EVERYWHERE

It would be impossible to mention the names of all who were present.

They represented every public body in the city; they represented every section of the community irrespective of creed or class. They came from far and near. Every aspect of social life had a place in the vast throng.

Special arrangements were made for motorists and for marshalling the enormous contingents who invaded the Falls. The motors formed a line of vehicles which seemed to be without end and thanks to a fine scene of discipline there was an absence of confusion. The crowds poured in to the neighbourhood of St Peter's from everywhere.

All the way from Messers Hughes Dickson's Mill to Andersonstown was a thoroughfare of mourners. Every house holder in the locality contributed to invest the occasion with a note of individual grief. The houses were closed, blinds were drawn, and everything was done to publicly express the feelings of the populace. Progress to the graveyard was necessarily slow, because of the congestion.

In the course of the pilgrimage many sotto voce words breathed an eloquence of their own in relation to the deceased. One overheard such remarks as "I knew wee Joe when he was almost a lad." "I remembered him in the early days when he was speaking at meetings all over the Province." "I remember him when he entered Parliament." "I remember his missions to the Antipodes and America." "I remember his fighting speeches and how he earned the title of the 'Pocket Demosthenes." "He was the kindest of souls, and we shall never look upon his like again," and many burst into tears.

Such scenes of sorrow were but punctuating marks in universal mourning, during which political antagonisms were forgotten.

At the graveside the coffin, after the last rites of the Church, was lowered to earth.

FOUR FRIENDS OF LONG AGO - SITTING: JOHN T. DONOVAN AND JOSEPH DEVLIN. STANDING (LEFT) ALDERMAN JOHN ROONEY AND TIM McCARTHY, EDITOR OF THE IRISH NEWS. ALL ARE BURIED IN MILLTOWN CEMETERY.

IRISH NEWS 31st DECEMBER, 1928

Mr Timothy McCarthy, editor, Irish News, died yesterday at his residence 131 Antrim Road after a long and painful illness, to the great grief of his widow, numerous relatives, and the directors and staff of this newspaper.

Blessed with a robust constitution, Mr McCarthy was in the enjoyment of good health up to the early months of this year when he had a breakdown, and though he rallied from time to time under the care and medical skill of Dr H. O'Prey, the family doctor; Sir Thomas Houston, M.D.; Mr Howard Stevenson, F.R.C.S.; Dr Maitland Beath and Dr T Harte, Dublin, he passed to the reward of a well spent life fortified by the Rites of Holy Church administered by the Rev G. McKillop, St Patrick's, in the early hours of yesterday morning.

During his illness the Very Rev. Canon Crolly, Vicar Capitular, St Matthew's, who had been one of Mr McCarthy's most intimate personal friends, was amongst many who called to make anxious inquiries regarding his health.

A BRILLIANT JOURNALIST

Throughout Ireland, and in a special degree, Dublin and Cork, Mr McCarthy was rightly regarded as one of the most brilliant journalists the country has ever produced. In London for years he was looked up to as a man of outstanding genius, and had he chosen to remain there he must inevitably have risen to an exalted position in the literary world of the British capital. But he heard the call of his native land, to which he returned, and rendered service throughout the remaining years of his life the value of which, from the point of view of Irish Nationality and Catholicity, can never be too highly assessed.

HIS EARLY CAREER

Mr McCarthy was born in Cloghroe, Inniscarra, Co. Cork, his father being the late Mr Denis McCarthy, a highly respected farmer. His early education was received at the National School, and from a private tutor. Before he was out of his 'teens' he entered upon his journalistic career, the *Cork Herald* and *Cork Weekly Herald,* which gave to Irish journalism many of its brightest stars, being his alma manner. Here he remained, discharging with efficiency and conscientiousness his various duties as a reporter for some years. During his association with the 'Herald,' Mr McCarthy was allotted some of the most important engagements that had to be dealt with throughout one of Ireland's most stormy periods, when public meetings were proclaimed by the British Government and the right of free speech denied the people's trusted leaders. As a very young man he was present at the famous 'burned store' meeting in Ennis with Mr William O'Brien, Mr Davitt and other parliamentary representatives who were dragooned by the military on the occasion, and the streets ran red with the blood of the people. One of Mr McCarthy's colleagues, the 'Freeman's Journal' reporter, was close by him when the former's silk hat was severed by the sword of a soldier during a charge of cavalry. The journalist referred to was Mr Jack Hill, whose death occurred a few years ago in Dublin.

HIS WORK IN DUBLIN

Leaving Cork in 1893, Mr McCarthy arrived in Dublin, where he was associated with the 'Freeman's Journal,' then at the zenith of its fame and usefulness as the National organ of Ireland. While Editor of the Dublin *Evening Telegraph* Mr McCarthy was responsible for a feature under the caption, 'Sparks from the Anvil,' which enjoyed such a large measure of popularity not along in the Metropolis, but in all parts of the country, Belfast included, that the 'Telegraph' circulation reached record figures.

FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE OF 'T.P.'

Having diligently devoted himself to the profession of his adoption, and in which he was destined to play such a prominent part, Mr McCarthy sought a wider sphere for the exercise of his journalistic genius and crossed to London. His popularity amongst his Dublin colleagues and the respect in which they held him as a journalist were exemplified when he was entertained to dinner in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin, prior to his departure for London, where he joined Mr T. P. O'Connor, Father of the House of Commons and doyen of journalists, and in co-operation with whom he officiated as sub-editor, news editor and leader writer on the staff of the *Evening Sun*. Mr O'Connor, after years of experience of Mr McCarthy's work, on one occasion stated in the hearing of the writer, following a demonstration in the National Club, Belfast, that "he regarded Tim McCarthy as the greatest political and most versatile journalist in the country."

In the absence of his chief, Mr McCarthy was entrusted by Mr O'Connor, who in those days paid prolonged visits to

Ireland and America on behalf of his country's cause, with the entire responsibility for the publication of the 'Evening Sun' and 'Star' and never was confidence better paid.

STEAD'S CHIEF LIEUTENANT

When Mr W. T. Stead, who went down in the ill fated Titanic, published the *Daily Paper* in London, Mr McCarthy was his principal lieutenant, and in fulfilment of a commission undertaken as his chief's request, Mr McCarthy travelled through Ireland in order to obtain a first hand account of how the country was then situated in regard to her social and political outlook. His vivid pen pictures in the *Daily Paper* as a sequel to that visit were afterwards quoted in the British House of Commons as unanswerable arguments for the settlement of the Irish question.

Intensely patriotic -consumed with the fire and zeal of the Cork man where his country's interests were concerned - Mr McCarthy never really became 'acclimatised' to the English atmosphere. His heart was always with his country; he was never happier than when pleading her cause, and once he decided to fight in the columns of the Press any issue no one wielded a more trenchant pen.

VICTIM OF COERCION

Fearless in his advocacy, he often brought down the wrath of the Government upon his head. It was during the operation of the Wyndham Coercion Act that he came under the ban of Dublin Castle. He was then editor of the *Irish People,* and in retaliation for a powerful indictment in the columns of the paper Mr McCarthy served three months in jail.

EDITOR OF THE IRISH NEWS

Mr McCarthy went to Omagh in 1905 as editor of the North West Publications, and on the 5th of November of the following year the directors of the Irish News secured his invaluable services as editor.

Readers of the paper had since then been familiar with his writings, both in the leading columns and special articles. At all times he was unswerving in his loyalty to the firm and to the twin cause of Faith and Fatherland, for the propagation of which the *Irish News* was founded.

All during the troubled period (the 1920's) through which Belfast has passed Mr McCarthy had a weighty responsibility on his shoulders. There were times when his position was fraught with personal danger, but night after night he returned to his duties, and remained at his post until he felt certain that the newspaper in which his heart was centred, and to the interests of which he devoted the best years of his life, was reading for the printing press.

As an editor he was supreme. As a colleague he was ever ready to acknowledge the merits of his staff and give credit, where credit was due. The young journalist who had the good fortune to begin his novitiate under Mr McCarthy found him in the truest and most personal sense of the term - "A guide, philosopher, and friend."

The paper was constantly in his thoughts all through his long and painful illness, and though unable to come to the

office, his brilliant brain and facile pen were up to a recent date in active operation in the service of the firm.

One of the most remarkable traits of Mr McCarthy's character was his love of Irish History. He had read every history of the country worthy of the name, and so close was his study and so wonderful his memory for dates, places, and personalities, that he could instantly, and without the slightest hesitation, supply the information desired upon any particulars received; they were always correct in every detail.

AN AMERICAN TRIBUTE

That Mr McCarthy's genius as a journalist was recognised far beyond the confines of his native land is exemplified by the tribute paid to his by a powerful American organ.

In its issue of July 10th, 1915, the *Chicago Citizen*, commenting upon the fate and fortunes of the *Irish News*, said - "They are fortunate in having as their editor during the past decade or more Mr Timothy McCarthy, a young Corkman who has settled in the Ulster capital and who is probably one of the most brilliant and versatile of Irish living journalists, a Nationalist to the heart's core, and with a political record that includes three months in prison under the late George Wyndham's coercion regime."

Mr McCarthy married in Sligo in 1905, his wife being Miss Katie McLynn, third daughter of Mr Denis McLynn, a well known contractor and builder, and former member of Sligo Corporation.

Mr McCarthy's funeral left his home on the lower Antrim Road in North Belfast for St Patrick's in Donegall Street, a few yards from the Irish News offices. After the service he was buried in Milltown Cemetery.

FRANCIS DAVIS

"The Belfastman"

By Richard Madden

THE JOURNAL OF THE WEST BELFAST HISTORICAL SOCIETY No.4

Francis Davis, one of our most neglected poets, who became known as 'The Belfastman' was born on St Patrick's Day in 1810 in Ballincollig, Co. Cork. The son of a Royal Artillery soldier and a Scottish Highland mother, Davis had instilled in him from an early age by his mother a love of noble thought and manly action, a spirit of independence and patriotism which characterised his life and shone through his poetry.

Unfortunately his mother died when he was about 12 years of age and his father sent him to live with a relative with whom the boy was most unhappy. Davis was mainly self taught and although he attended for only a short time in Hillsborough he taught himself French and in later life was competent to write essays in Latin, Greek and Gaelic. He became a weaver by trade and during the time spent toiling at the loom weaving cloth he began to weave words as well, and before long his poetry and ballads were being recited throughout towns and villages across the country. When Davis was about 20 years of age he went to work in Scotland and later in Manchester. Although a Protestant, he became like so many of his co-religionists of the period, interested in Catholic Emancipation and threw himself wholeheartedly into the struggle. As 'The Belfastman' he wrote a good deal of poetry for *The Nation* and *Dublin University Magazine* and other periodicals. Included in his work was a fine poem on the death of Thomas Davis which was printed in 'The Nation.'

He returned to Belfast in 1845 to resume his work as a weaver but after a short time he gave this up to become editor of the 'Belfastman Journal.' He was appointed in succession to the posts of Librarian of the People's Institute and Assistant Registrar in Queen's College. He published volumes of his poems in 1847, 1849, 1852, 1855 and 1863. Included in these works were 'The Tablet of Shadows,' 'The Lisprings of the Lagan,' and 'Earlier and Later Leaves or an Autumn Gathering.' He wrote some very beautiful love poems, patriotic songs and ballads, one of the most popular at the time being 'Kathleen Ban Adair' portraying an incident which followed the Battle of Antrim. He wrote many poems about the North of Ireland including 'Portballintrae,' 'My Black North Girl,' 'The North is Up,' 'Queen of the Lagan' and 'Divis Mountain Side.' Rev. Columban O'Grady in an introduction to one of the volumes 'Earlier and later Leaves' published in 1878 says of Davis "He is a genuine child of song, a worthy interpreter of Nature's music and a Pontiff of the Beautiful."

Before he died, on the 7th October 1885, Davis became a Catholic and was buried in Milltown Cemetery. His grave lies at the far end of that section of the cemetery which is adjacent to the laneway leading to where the old St Patrick's Home was situated. The Belfast Young Ireland Society erected a fine Celtic Cross over his grave many years ago, but unfortunately it has lately become somewhat neglected. The epitaph on the back of the cross reads.

To Francis Davis, a self-taught Scholar, a gifted Poet and an ardent Patriot. This cross has been erected in token of admiration for his brilliant genius and Purity of Purpose by the Memorial Committee of the Belfast Young Ireland Society

The poetry of Tennyson, Hardy and Keats is familiar to our schoolchildren studying for examinations but it is unfortunate to say the least, that a local poet whose verse portrays such beauty and sense of feeling is practically unknown among his own people. Of all the many thousands who visit the cemetery each year, I wonder how many pause for a moment at the grave of Davis as a mark of respect to a Belfast man who loved this city and its working class people.

JOHN DONAVON

John Dovanavon was born in Belfast and pursued the career of a solicitor, being called to the Bar at the age of 27 in 1914.

But he had also journalistic qualities and was involved with the Irish News as a journalist. However, as a keen supporter of Joe Devlin and the Irish parliamentary Party, he yearned to become more involved in politics. He was in a sense a *protege* of Devlin and proved a popular figure within the party. In 1906 he led the Irish Nationalist delegation to Australia on a successful fund raising trip. Despite being called to the Bar, he preferred to concentrate on politics, and was elected M.P. for West Wicklow that same year.

But the political landscape was changing in favour of Sinn Féin, and on Sunday 7th October 1917 he addressed a Redmondite demonstration at Drumaroad, Co. Down calling on the National Volunteers and Ancient Order of Hiberians to concentrate on promoting Irish sports and culture rather than ‘political struggle.’

However his speech fell on the ears of a minority, as the majority (some 4,000) were in attendance at a counter rally addressed by Countess Markievicz at Castlewellan. The conservative *Morning Post* commented in its columns that *Mr Donavons speeches were that of a man who feels the ground slipping from underneath his feet, and that of his party.*

In 1918 Sinn Féin eclipsed the Irish Parliamentary Party in the general election, although they maintained their political hold in the North. Over the country as a whole, the old style Nationalist, who had held 68 seats at the dissolution, were reduced to a mere six, of which five were in Ulster. Sinn Féin, by contrast, was confirmed as the motive power in Nationalist Ireland, with 73 seats, while the Unionists (assisted by a redistribution) had increased their Commons strength to 26.

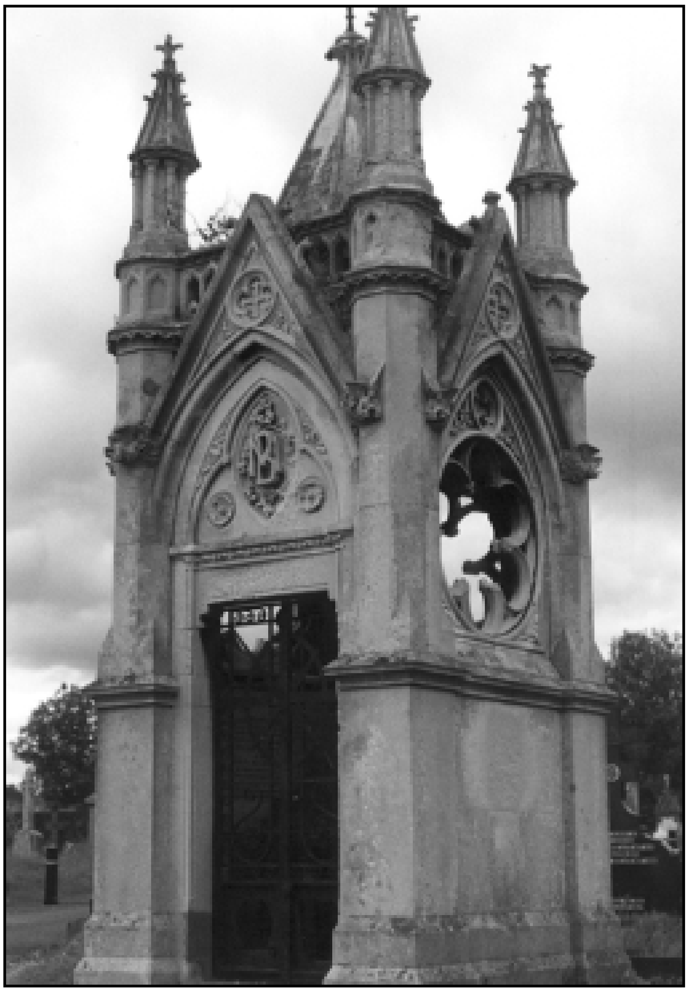
Donavon lost his seat, and returned to journalism. Up until his illness he was London correspondent for the Freemans Journal.

He died at the Sanatorium, Brachory, Aberdeen in Scotland on Tuesday 17th January, 1922, leaving a widow and two sons.

Milltown is a major part of the community, and is as such *the peoples* cemetery. While we have covered figures and events of history within this book, we appreciate and recognise for many people Milltown is for them a personal link to their deceased family members. Within its bounds is a wealth of history and we would like to emphasise that it was impossible for us to cover every aspect of that history. However, we would hope that this publication may encourage others to follow, and that it will act as a guide to both locals and tourists alike.

SNAPSHOTS OF MILLTOWN

The previous pages illustrated just a few of the graves in Milltown. Every tombstone tells its own story and in this cemetery there are thousands of them. The following are pictures of just a few of the headstones to be seen.



PRAY FOR
ST. MATTHEWS PARISH BELFAST.

McDONNELL
IN MEMORY OF MY DEAR HUSBAND
JAMES C (SEN) DIED 10TH NOV 1942 AGED 39YRS
P.O.W. SHIP IN JAPAN AND BURIED AT SEA
AND OUR LOVING SON JAMES C (JUN)
DIED IN LONDON 11TH FEB 1973 AGED 30 YRS
ALSO MY DEAR BROTHER WILLIAM P. REID
DIED 2ND FEB. 1974 AGED 70 YEARS
ALSO MARGARET McDONNELL DIED 1ST MAY 1985
LOVING MOTHER OF KATHLEEN, NORA AND JOE.
R I P

TO THE MEMORY OF
JOHN GEORGE FLEMING,
HEAD INSPECTOR OF NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

ERECTED BY
JOHN McVEIGH
BERNARD JOSEPH
SARAH MONAGHAN
BERNARD MONAGHAN
MARGARET MONAGHAN
R. I. P.

ERECTED BY
JOHN McVEIGH
SARAH MONAGHAN
BERNARD MONAGHAN
MARGARET MONAGHAN
WHO DIED 28th FEBRUARY 1927
JOHN McVEIGH
R. I. P.

MN
F. CUSH
FIREMAN AND TRIMMER
S.S. "EL MIRLO"

ERECTED
BY
ALSO THEIR SON JOHN CLEAR
WHO DIED YOUNG

PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

BY
ALSO INTERRED
6TH INNIS. DRAGOONS
ACTION IN FRANCE

JAMES
JOHN

THOMAS FLOOD
AND FRANCES McKENNA

JAMES FLYNN
JOHN JAMES
AND HIS WIFE

HUGH CORRY

In loving memory of
Francis McPeake
In loving memory

RITA IACOVELLA

WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE HELP THAT THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE HAVE GIVEN US TOWARDS THIS PUBLICATION

Gerry Adams M.P.
For his support and appreciation of this publication.

Terry Goldsmith
For his 'inside' information

Eamon Phoenix
For his encouragement and support

John Fleming (Flem) and Jimmy Rodgers
For their help, time and interest

Billy Wiggins
For his personal insight on Tom Williams execution

Michael McKernon
For the cover design

As always there are others who have helped in their own way throughout the process of compiling this publication. You know who you are and we hope that the booklet is what you expected!

THE FOLLOWING BOOKS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY USEFUL IN THE RESEARCH OF THIS PUBLICATION

Holy Way in Belfast, Andrew Boyd
A Rebel Voice, A History of Belfast Republicanism, Raymond J. Quinn
Lagan Enclave, A History of Conflict in the Short Strand, Raymond J. Quinn
Northern Nationalism, Eamon Phoenix
Antrims Patriot Graves, Seamus Steele
Belfast Graves, National Graves Association
Northern Ireland, A Chronology of the Troubles, Paul Bew & Gordon Gillespie
The McMahon Family Murders, Joe Baker
Post 381, James Doherty
Down in a Free State, John Quinn
Gravestone Inscriptions, Belfast Vol.2, Ulster Historical Foundation

THE FOLLOWING ORIGINAL SOURCE MATERIAL HAS BEEN USED

Belfast Telegraph 18th January, 1922
Belfast Telegraph, 24th March 1922
Belfast Telegraph, 20th January 1934
Irish News, 25th March 1922
Irish News, 2 August 1957
Irish News 19th January 1934
Irish News, 31st December 1928
Journal of the West Belfast Historical Society No. 4

THE GLENRAVEL LOCAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Glenravel Project aims to reclaim history for ordinary people.

IRISH NEWS MARCH 4 1994

It has its own nights on television. It has its own shows on radio and on the cable network it even has its own channel. There is no doubt that the subject of local history is one of the most fascinating of all educational subjects. The reason is simple - anyone can relate to it. Unfortunately for many years the subject has been confined to those who felt that they had an educational advantage over the majority of people throughout Belfast. For years these 'educated historians' have taught us the history which they wanted us to hear and therefore giving an impression that the subject was 'boring and dusty.' This is no longer the case as more and more people become interested in their own local and factual history. It was out of this interest that in 1991 the Glenravel Local History Project was born.

Today many people are becoming extremely interested in the history of their area. Many are coming together to find out about this and in different parts of the country there are community programs set up to explore the subject. Our history is also from this background when a community decided to come together to explore the history of a section of our area which contained the old Belfast Poor House and the historic Clifton Street cemetery. In the centre of this area stood Glenravel Street and it was from this that we choose our name. Our overall aim was to create a new community based interest in the history of our district and to achieve this various articles were written by members of the group and published in numerous newspapers and magazines. We have also published our own material covering the histories of other Belfast districts as well as subjects ranging from local ghost and crime stories. The Glenravel Project is not sustained by any funding and our capital comes from our publication the Belfast Magazine. This is a monthly publication the profits of which are used to keep a full time staff in operation. Today the project is a registered historical charity.

There is perhaps no more fruitful form of education than to arouse the interest of a people in their own surroundings.

Richard Livingstone

... Mr O'Rorke looked round to see what the husband was doing, and found him in the act of hacking at his throat with a razor. Dashing on him, he wrested the razor from the man but not before he had severed vital parts, and his life blood petered out.

Still think our local history's boring?

BELFAST
magazine

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Milltown Cemetery has become an established landmark of Nationalist Belfast. Within its bounds is a wealth of history which captures a wide diversity within the sphears of both the political and social spectrum.

The above photograph shows the graves of two young Belfast men both of whom died for Ireland, the only difference being their fight took them fields apart. While one had died on the streets of Belfast within the IRA in 1921, the other died as a result of serving in France with the Leinsters for what he hoped would pave unification. They took different approaches of ideology, but what can not separate them, was the roots that tied them both to Belfast, now they lie side by side in Milltown.

PRICE £4.50